

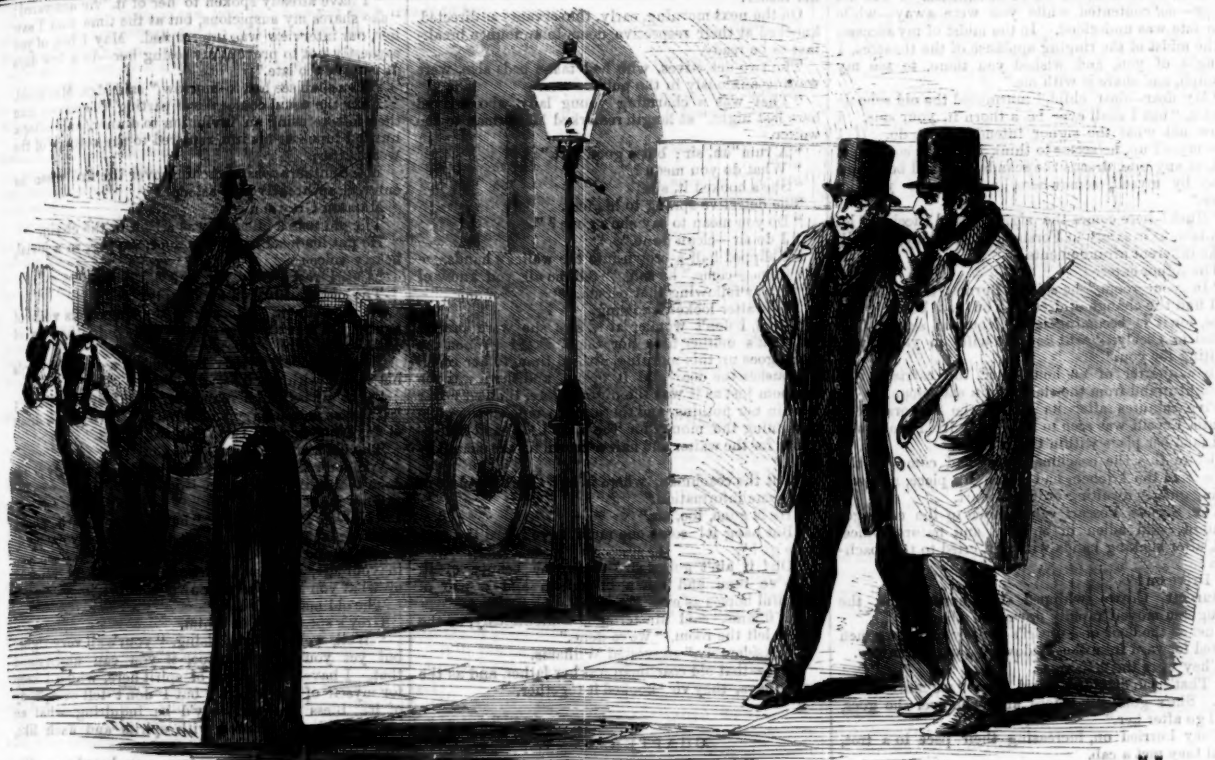
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[THE DETECTIVES.]

A YOUNG GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY.

By VANE IRETON ST. JOHN,

Author of "The Queen of Night," "In Spite of the World," &c

CHAPTER XXXIV

They are my friends—good friends they may have been. But he it is to whom I owe my life and I will cleave to him.

Just at the moment when Signor Foscarei uttered his words of insulting menace to Cicely Crowe, the door opened, and the schoolmaster entered.

His face was deadly pale, and his lips trembled with some suppressed emotion.

Cicely threw herself into his arms.

"My dear, dear father," she cried, "what is this they are saying of you?"

The old man looked from one to the other in amazement.

"What does it all mean?" he said; "I am at a loss to imagine."

The Italian eyed him with a supercilious smile, while he replied:

"Read this document, sir; then, perhaps, you will clearly understand everything."

He handed him the paper, which offered a reward for his apprehension.

Burnett Crowe read it through, stopping now and then to look up and examine the faces of those who watched him.

He put it down on the table when he had finished it.

"As Heaven is my judge," he cried, "I understand not a word of this."

His manner was so natural—his astonishment so complete—that any one less suspicious and evilly disposed than Foscarei, would at once have been convinced of his innocence.

As it was, the Italian smiled incredulously.

"This is difficult to believe, Mr. Crowe," he said;

"the officers of justice seem pretty clear upon the point—tell a connected story, and are satisfied that

you are guilty. If you are innocent, and think you can prove yourself so, you had best deliver yourself up and stand a trial. It will look more honest, I assure you, than any attempt at concealment."

The Italian was quite unprepared for the effect of his words.

"Certainly," cried the old schoolmaster, with dignity, "it will look more honest, as you say; but I should scarcely deem it necessary to consult appearances. An English jury will never convict an innocent man upon the simple oath of another, and that other one who has tried to destroy his child. No—no! I will deliver myself up, and trust to justice."

The Italian turned pale, and glanced at his wife, who, during the conversation had entered the room.

"Close the door," he said to her.

When she had done so, he added:

"Sit down, Mr. Crowe, and let us discuss this question. You have no witnesses, you say?"

"None."

"And what is your version of the story?"

"I waited for Mangies Worsop, after he had lent me ten pounds, until I thought he'd forgotten me, and I then left the place, yielding to an uncontrollable impulse, which, had it lasted, would have made me wander from street to street calling out the name of my daughter."

The Italian smiled incredulously.

"A jury would never believe that," he said quietly.

"Perhaps not," said Crowe; "at any rate, there is no doubt that at the moment, I was unaccountable for my actions."

The Italian caught at this.

"You might have taken the money when under the influence of this fit of temporary excitement," he said.

"No—no," cried the schoolmaster. "I never committed a dishonest act in my life, and I should not have done so then. Besides, had I done so, the money would have remained on me, whereas I have not a penny left even of the ten pounds he gave me."

The Italian thought a moment.

"Well," he said, "I am a man of fact. I do not see the use of depicting my own thoughts. I assure you

that your story is very incredible, and were I on the jury, I should convict."

Cicely made a gesture of angry expostulation.

"What!" she cried, "do you then think my father a thief?"

The Italian bowed with affected courtesy.

"My words amounted to that," he said.

Burnett Crowe rose.

"I will leave this house at once, then," he said. "I will allow no man to be compromised by me."

The Italian detained him.

He altered his tone now.

"Remember, sir," he said, "that if I believe you guilty, I believe you were the victim of a sudden impulse, and that your mind and heart are pure as ever. Do not act again under the influence of rashness. Remember, if you give yourself up, you ruin your daughter. Ever if you are proved innocent, the affair will create an unpleasant impression—if you are proved guilty (which, under the circumstances, would, I fear, be most probable), she must leave the stage for ever."

Burnett Crowe sat down, but made no reply.

"What are you to do, you will ask?" continued the Italian.

"When you are safe out of this town I will tell you."

"But how are we to escape?" cried Cicely.

"I scarcely know," said Foscarei; "yet, stay—can you drive, Mr. Crowe?"

The schoolmaster looked up in surprise.

"Yes," he said, "a little."

"Good; then it can be managed. Your daughter must dress herself in travelling costume—and you must assume the part of my coachman. You will then mount the box of my carriage, and drive out of town, stopping at the George Inn, about four miles along the road. Before you start I will give you all the necessary directions. Go my dear," he added to his wife, "go and see that the signora's dresses are ready, while I speak to the coachman."

The father and daughter were left alone.

"My poor dear father," cried Cicely, as she sat down beside him and passed her arms round his neck, "once escape from this town, and I will leave these people

for ever. The signor has grossly insulted me about you."

"Alas, my child!" said Burnett Crowe, "you were happy and contented before I came after you. I am a poor, helpless old man, and the sooner I am dead and the earth is shovelled over me the better. I am worse than helpless, for Heaven seems to give you friends, and I take them from you."

Cicely burst into tears.

"Do not speak thus, dear father," she cried, "because it is accusing me of selfishness. I was not happy—not contented while you were away—while your fate was undecided. In the midst of my success, in the midst of the ringing applause of the theatres, I thought of you, and wished you there, to see my triumph, and share it with me."

"My dear—dear child," murmured the old schoolmaster, "but I shall ever be a thorn in your side. I know not what the signor intends me to do. If I give myself up, he seems to think I shall be convicted, and, at any rate, dreads the scandal. I had better go away by myself, somewhere, and trouble you no more."

"Hush! here comes the signor," said Cicely, "let him take us in safety to Forham; once there, we will make different arrangements."

The signor entered. "In your room," he said to Burnett Crowe, "you will find the change of dress. You had better go at once, for it is becoming late. You, too, signora," he added to Cicely, "will find my wife in your room waiting for you."

In a quarter of an hour after, the carriage was brought round from the stables by a stableman.

Five minutes after its arrival, the Signora Constantia Ervelli was seen to issue forth from the house, and take her place within the vehicle.

Before this, the coachman, who had come up the steps from the kitchen, had taken his place, and was sitting quietly awaiting orders to start.

The Signor Foscarei came down to the carriage-window, said adieu in a bland and natural voice, and, after shaking hands with her, cried to the coachman:

"Drive on!"

Burnett Crowe whipped the horses, and the brougham moved rapidly down the street.

Just as the door of Foscarei's house closed, two men darted forward from the shadow of a dark archway.

They were the detectives.

"That's the daughter," said one; "we must follow her. She's gone on before, and wherever she goes, he'll go after her."

They hurried on, increasing their pace to a trot, until they met a cab.

Into this they leaped.

"Follow that carriage," said Masterman, "and your fare shall be a handsome one."

The cabman, who was not accustomed to detectives or madmen, and did not know to which class to assign his fares, stared, but complied.

The brougham kept straight on along the High Street.

Then it crossed the market-place, passed into a narrow thoroughfare, and emerged into the open country.

The road was a lonely one, and, late as it was, Burnett Crowe met not a single vehicle.

Over the country there was a hush—a palpable silence.

The sound, therefore, of the cab behind them, was soon evident to the ears of both father and daughter.

Crowe slackened his pace.

The cabman did so likewise.

"They are pursuing us," thought the old man, immediately.

He drew up, and, leaping down, pretended to be doing something to the traces.

The detectives were nonplussed.

What were they to do?

If they were too eager in their pursuit, they would be observed, and the girl, becoming alarmed, might turn back.

Their thoughts at present were directed entirely to her—they never for one moment supposed that the quiet, methodical coachman was Burnett Crowe.

When, therefore, the cabman stopped short, Masterman put his head out, crying:

"Drive on; there's plenty of room in the road—only some accident."

He spoke this in a very loud voice, on purpose to be heard by Cicely.

The cabman obeyed.

"Well," said he, "they be madmen inside my cab, I be certain. First they say keep that 'ere vehicle in view, and then, ven I stops to wait till it goes ahead agin, they says 'Drive on.'"

He was in the midst of his cogitations when Masterman again spoke.

"I say, cabby," he cried, poking his head out, "drive very slowly—let them pass you."

In a few moments they could hear the brougham once more advancing, and, after awhile, it passed them, going very quickly.

At the George Inn it stopped, and, before Cicely Crowe descended, her father entered and inquired if two beds were disengaged for the night.

The answer being in the affirmative, the young girl descended, the carriage was taken round into the courtyard, and, after giving directions for an early breakfast, Cicely entered her bedroom, as did also her father.

On the next morning, early, the servants as directed, knocked at their respective doors to announce breakfast to be ready.

The two detectives, who had taken beds also, were waiting anxiously in the public room.

"That was a charming young lady who arrived here last night," at length remarked Masterman to the waiter.

"A rum 'un, sir; but a good sort."

"What do you mean?"

"She's hooked it, sir."

The detective sprang to his feet.

"Do you mean to say she's gone?"

"I do sir—clean gone."

He slipped half-a-crown into the waiter's hands.

"Come—come," he said, "tell me all you know of it. I was following that person."

The waiter looked knowing.

"Well, I don't wonder at it, sir; she were pretty, but that's neither here nor there, is it? When the maid goes up this morning, a third time, to her room, she pushes the door and it opens, and there was the bedroom just as it was the night before, the bed never slept in nor nothing, and there was a note on the table containing the money for the two beds, and half-a-crown for the waiter and half-a-crown for the chambermaid."

"But the coachman, where is he? Perhaps he can give some information."

"He is gone, too, sir."

"But hang it! some one must have heard the carriage go!"

"Oh! it ain't gone, sir! that's the beauty of it. They've been and left a brougham and a pair of beautiful horses as ever you see."

"Williams," said Masterman, contentiously, as the waiter left the room, "we're done."

"Considerably," suggested Williams.

"Yes—that old coachman was her father, and as the waiter says, they've 'hooked it together.'"

CHAPTER XXV.

Fair was her form and fair her face,
Her voice as music sweet—
Falling as gently on the ear
As the tread of fairy feet.

Elton.

DURING the progress of my story of late, there is one set of characters which I have been compelled to neglect, and to which it is necessary for me now to return.

I allude to Marston Grey and the Mansfields.

Gabriel Desney's friend knew well that for a few days, at any rate, Clara would be in London away from her relations.

If, therefore, he desired an interview with Louisa Mansfield, without the interference or even knowledge of her sister, he had no time to lose.

It was for this reason that he at once took the train for Lorneby, and directed his steps, the first thing in the morning, to Ellersby Grange.

Mrs. Mansfield received him with a show of some surprise.

"You are, no doubt, somewhat astonished at my sudden re-appearance," he said; "I have come to see if possible, your daughter Louisa."

"She is very ill!" returned Mrs. Mansfield; "but she may be able to see you to-morrow. Can you remain here until then?"

"Yes."

He hesitated.

How could he allow Mrs. Mansfield to know that he was aware of her intention of going to London, without breaking his promise to Clara?

"I wonder," he added, "that after all that has occurred, you care to remain here?"

"I shall not remain long. Indeed, Miss Mansfield has preceded me to London, and I hope in a few days to join her."

Marston Grey affected surprise.

"Oh! indeed," he said; "Miss Mansfield is then absent? Well, I will look in again to-morrow."

Mrs. Mansfield was uncomfortable.

Why did this man wish to see her daughter?

Why, against all etiquette, did he thus ask for an interview, without even mentioning its object to the mother?

The young man observed her manner, and guessed its cause.

"Madam," he said: "you doubtless consider it

odd in me—a stranger—to ask for an interview with your daughter. I will tell you why I ask it. I have reason to believe that my friend, Gabriel Desney, met his death unfairly, and I have a few questions to ask Miss Louisa."

Mrs. Mansfield turned very pale.

"Louisa is in a very delicate state of health at present," she said; "would it not be unsafe to speak to her of it now?"

Grey smiled sadly.

"I have already spoken to her of it," he answered; "she shares my suspicions, but at the time that I saw her, our interview was interrupted. May I beg of you earnestly not to prevent my seeing her—in a few days it may be too late."

"You shall see her to-morrow," said Mrs. Mansfield. After the usual courtesies of parting, the young man then left, refusing an invitation to dinner, and after a hurried lunch at his inn, repaired to the cottage of the woodcutter.

Bob Smithers was crouching over the fire when he entered, apparently half-asleep.

Marston Grey smiled.

The old man's idleness was a link in the chain.

He put his head in at the door, saying, in a jovial, hearty voice:

"Can I rest awhile, master?"

The old man looked up sharply.

"Yes, come in," he cried, in the querulous voice of age; "you're welcome to what I have in the way of seats."

He didn't offer to rise, but pushed a chair towards his visitor with his foot.

"The air is fresh hereabouts," said Grey, carelessly; "it makes one hungry and thirsty. Have you a drain of anything here? I can pay well for it."

The old man eyed him suspiciously.

"I don't keep an inn!" he said, petulantly; "it don't look like ne'er a one—do it?"

Grey laughed.

"No—no!" he cried; "but I don't care about drinking at your expense, master, because your bit of a cottage and bit of money is all you have to keep you in your age, and it is not for me to come and rob you of what you have for your own comfort."

The old man smiled.

Grey's speech softened him.

"Well, well," he said, rising, "you're all very right; but yet you're wrong, too, if you can understand that. I have a little drop of spirit here, which I keep for myself of an evening; but I don't tell everybody of it. Bless you, sir, they'd be inquiring what an old body like me wanted with spirits and such like, and where I got it."

While he spoke, he drew from a cupboard a goodly-sized bottle of brandy—a bottle which Marston's quick glance detected not to be a solitary one.

He drank the glass offered him.

It was very fair French brandy.

"This man has had hush-money," thought he, "or where could he get this?"

"Well, I am sure," he added aloud, "this is quite a treat. You are lucky to be able to get such stuff. I suppose you take some of it out with you woodcutting?"

Bob Smithers darted a quick glance at him. "How did you know I was a woodcutter?" he asked.

"By the implements yonder."

"Ah, true, true!" murmured the old man, and relapsed into silence.

"I am fortunate to find you at home now," said Grey. "I suppose you are generally out about this time, or have you given up the business?"

"Given it up!" exclaimed Smithers, excitedly—"given it up! Why should I give it up? What should I live on?"

"Oh! I suppose you have saved some money, eh?"

"What do you want to know for?" asked the old man, almost angrily. "I don't keep open this cottage here to answer questions, I can tell ye!"

Marston Grey threw off his disguise.

"I am a friend," he said, "of Gabriel Desney's."

The woodcutter's face turned livid.

"What is that to me?" he faltered. "Why am I to be always worried about that young man who fell over the rocks?"

"Did you throw him over?"

At these words all traces of fear left the old man's face.

He raised his right hand to heaven, and said, with a rude dignity which at once impressed Marston Grey in his favour:

"As Heaven is my judge, I am innocent of his blood."

Marston Grey was thrown back upon himself, and felt almost disappointed.

A kind of vague hope seemed to have entered his mind that this man was guilty, and not Clara Mansfield.

"He could not bear to think of the beautiful girl he had once loved branded with the name of assassin."

"I believe you," he said, "but, nevertheless, I believe also that you know who is guilty."

As regarded his own innocence, the old man was reluctant enough; but when mention was made of his knowledge of another's guilt, he became confused and shy.

"I know nothing of it," he answered, doggedly.

"I must say I do not believe you," answered Marston Grey. "You have money by you which has not been derived from your trade as a woodcutter. That money has been given you to make you keep silence. You are wrong not to tell me, because I should not betray you."

The woodcutter eyed his questioner curiously.

"If you don't mean to tell anyone what I say," he answered, "I don't see why you want to know anything."

"I want to punish the one who has murdered my friend," returned Marston Grey; "but for the sake of the family to which the person belongs, I do not wish any public scandal. I want to take vengeance quietly and privately."

For a moment old Smithers seemed to be hesitating, as if about to say something; then, rising, he poked the fire violently.

"I am sorry, very sorry, that I can't help you," he said; "but as I know nothing, I can't say much."

"Well, well," returned Marston Grey, solemnly, "you are an old man, and a day is not far distant when you may wish to relieve your mind from a burden. I will leave my address with you, therefore, that if you wish to see me, you may send to me."

The old man's face quivered with emotion as Marston Grey spoke.

But he made no reply.

Marston rose to go.

"Good day, then, Mr. Smithers," he said. "I hope next time we meet, you will be in a better mood."

"Good day," returned Smithers, gruffly.

He still looked at the fire, and would not show his face to his visitor.

Marston Grey walked away angrily.

"He is an obstinate, pig-headed old fool," he muttered to himself, "and he'll repent it when it's too late to prevent mischief."

The next morning he went, as arranged, to Ellersby Grange.

Louisa was in the drawing-room ready to receive him.

She looked very pale and ill, and she extended, without rising, a thin, white hand to Marston Grey.

"I am sincerely grateful to you, Mr. Grey," she said, "for taking so great an interest in Mr. Desney's fate."

A spasm of pain crossed her features as she spoke.

"He was my friend," said Grey, gazing with undiminished interest at Louisa's beautiful face; "and I feel bound to avenge him, if foul play caused his death. Did he ever speak to you of any enemy?"

"No, none!"

"No one he disliked, or who disliked him—no one it would be his interest to remove, or whose interest it would be to remove him?"

Louisa tried to think—tried as if the effort were painful to her.

Then she said slowly:

"The only one whom he seemed to dislike among those I know, was my sister Clara."

"Indeed!"

Marston Grey knew this already.

He knew the reason well.

But a clue might, in Louisa's words, be found to connect Clara's thoughts and her actions with the mystery of the deadly crime he was seeking to unravel.

"Yes, there seemed always a strange hatred between them. Many times has Clara warned me against poor Gabriel."

"On what grounds?"

"On the ground that he was a reckless, dissipated man, I should infer; but it was only inference, for she would never speak out."

"And did Gabriel ever speak ill of her?"

"Scarcely ill; he did not like her. A strange thing happened the night poor Desney died. My sister complained of headache, and went up towards her room. I followed her. I saw her pass Gabriel's room, and peep in—then she entered, and closed the door. I listened—I could hear her talking to herself, but could distinguish no words. Then she came out again, and hurried to her own chamber. Impelled by I know not what feeling, I concealed myself, and when she had gone, I went into Gabriel's room. There was no light, as there had been before; there was only the dim, unearthly glimmering of the fire. The room, however, was full of the smoke of burning paper—the had evidently destroyed something."

"Why did you not follow her and ask her what it meant?"

"I know not; I felt as if I had committed a wrong already."

"Alas!" said Marston Grey, "if you had followed her to her room that night and remained with her, Gabriel Desney would be alive still."

"What mean you?" cried the young girl excitedly.

Marston Grey took her thin, feverish hand in his. "Miss Mansfield," he said, "have you strength to hear a terrible story? If you have, I can explain to you how Gabriel Desney died; and why your sister destroyed those papers."

Louisa felt as if a fearful revelation was about to be made to her.

Yet not a shadow of the truth fell upon her mind.

Was it probable that she would for a moment dream that Clara destroyed her lover?

Then, delicately as he could, Marston Grey told the story of Clara's false marriage with Gabriel Desney.

Louisa listened in silence.

She could scarcely comprehend the extent of his deceit and her sister's crime.

"What," she cried, in tremulous accents, "do you then think that my sister murdered Gabriel Desney, her husband?"

"Yes—indeed—I do believe it—solemnly."

Louisa rose from her chair with a start as if a sudden pang in her heart compelled her to move.

She staggered a moment—murmured some inarticulate sounds, and then fell heavily into the arms of Marston Grey; her beautiful head resting on his shoulder; her long, waving curls streaming over her neck and bosom.

Her skin was as white as marble—the vital fluid seemed to have expelled itself from her body.

He was alarmed.

If he called for assistance, Mrs. Mansfield would blame him for telling her the story.

Taking her up in his arms, therefore, he carried her to a sofa; and hastening out, entered the dining-room, and brought from thence a carafe of water.

With the aid of this he soon restored the unconscious girl to her senses.

Then she smiled sadly.

"I fear I have been very foolish, Mr. Grey," she said. "I ought to have had strength to bear the trial. I thank you very much for confiding in me; yet I know not how to act. You have placed me in a position of great difficulty."

"Will you be guided by me?"

Louisa looked into his honest, handsome face and said:

"Yes."

"In the first place, then," he answered, "I have told you what I have under the supposition that you would keep it secret. I do not wish Mrs. Mansfield to know the story, and I must beg that you will on no account allow your sister to suspect that you have heard anything. This crime must be punished, though there shall be no public exposure. You must watch her conduct, and let me know anything suspicious which may happen. Above all, be guided by her in nothing."

After a moment, Mrs. Mansfield entered, and seeing that the conference was ended, she begged Marston Grey to remain to dinner.

He did so, talked easily to mother and daughter, and went away with a new feeling in his heart.

"Marston," he said, as he flung himself petulantly on the seat of a first-class carriage in the London train, "if you don't be careful, old fellow, you'll fall in love, and spoil a tragedy by turning it into a melodrama."

CHAPTER XXXVI

Stay! who are these who come from out

The shade of yonder tree.

Their walk was stealthy, for I heard

No sound borne on the breeze,

But rustling as of leaves that fall,

Or the ripple of summer seas.

Roslyn.

It was with feelings of bitter disappointment and hopelessness that Granby Saville read John Shadow's letter announcing his departure, and the fact of his abandoning his former protegee.

His first thought was of Clara.

The old obstacles had again arisen.

He was once more the plaything of fortune—in a worse position, in fact, than he had been, because his time had been wasted, and because his hopes had been raised, as it appeared now, unwarrantably.

It was on the morning after John Shadow's departure, that a clerk, in the employ of the Royal United Bank of Commerce, called upon Saville.

He seemed somewhat flustered.

"Were you aware, sir," he said, "that Maldon's bill came due to-day?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"Did you know it yesterday?"

"Certainly."

"I wonder, then, sir, that you drew out all your

money yesterday, and yet allowed the bill to be presented to us."

Granby gazed at him aghast.

"Drew out my money!" he cried. "Why, what the devil do you mean? I never drew out a farthing."

The clerk smiled incredulously.

"You are under a delusion, sir. We paid, by your order, eight thousand pounds yesterday, to Edward Courtenay."

Saville saw at once his position, knew to whom he owed his ruin, and turned deadly pale.

"The cheques were forgeries," he gasped. "Courtenay has fled from England. This last act of his leaves me penniless."

He sank back upon his chair and buried his face in his hands, his form fairly trembling with emotion.

The clerk saw his grief was real, and pitied him.

"This is very sad, Mr. Saville," he said, "pray look at your cheque-book. If you have any one from whom you can borrow money of during the day, we will set this matter right for you."

Granby Saville looked up.

His face was still deadly pale; but it had recovered somewhat of its calmness.

"Sir," he said, "I must not trifle with you. You must go back and tell your employers that I am a beggar; that Courtenay has ruined me, and that I am quite unable to meet my engagements. I have no friends in England!"

The clerk said "good-day," politely, and left the room.

Granby Saville went to his desk and took out his cheque-book.

There were the three cheques duly entered on the counterfoil.

The forgery was excellent.

None but he himself could have detected it.

His position was terrible.

He had but twenty pounds in the world. John Shadow had persuaded him to cash bills drawn and accepted by them jointly to large amounts. Upwards of fifteen hundred pounds' worth of this paper was now out and would be due in a few days.

The men who held the bills were Jews; and having the amount of benevolence usual among those worthy people it was not to be expected that they would be very lenient.

Nothing stared him in the face, therefore, but arrest and imprisonment, for he knew no one in this emergency to whom he could apply.

To the Marquis of Castleton he might have gone.

But he loathed the idea of obtaining bounty from one whom he believed to be his father, but who would lend to him under such circumstances, as a rich man to a pauper.

Clara he feared to face.

To whom, then, could he apply for advice?

Marston Grey!

His name occurred to him as if by instinct.

He might at least give him counsel, if not practical assistance.

Acting upon the impulse of the moment, he at once departed for Grey's residence.

He was at home, and received his visitor with evident surprise.

In a few words Granby Saville explained the position which was the cause of his visit.

"Why do I seek your advice, you may ask," he said; "I will tell you. Do you know anything of the Mansfields? Are they people who love money, or would Mrs. Mansfield permit her daughter to marry me—poor as I am—and fly with me to Australia? There I would soon earn a fortune once more."

"I doubt it not," said Marston Grey; "but I should hope you would earn it for a worthier object."

"Worthier object!" cried Granby, flushing; "excuse me, Mr. Grey; but there is no woman alive who is more worthy a man's love than Clara Mansfield. I came here to ask you to break the news of my ruin to her and to her mother. I cannot do it. This done, I will throw myself at Clara's feet, and ask her to give me an incentive to exertion."

Marston Grey had been pacing the room agitatedly, as Saville spoke.

He now dropped into a chair.

"By Heavens!" he murmured; "I can keep silence no longer. Granby Saville, as you are a man, and a gentleman, hear me out patiently. I am about to save you from a terrible fate, at the risk of making you my deadly foe."

Granby gazed at him in wild alarm.

"What new misfortune awaits me?" he said.

"One which will be far worse to bear for the time than that which has already come upon you," replied Grey, in a soft tone of kindness; "but one which may, after a time—after a little reflection and thought—be construed into a great piece of good-fortune."

Then minutely, from the commencement, he detailed the story of Clara Mansfield, as he had done to her sister.

He neglected nothing.

He spoke of her marriage with Gabriel Desney, her subsequent faithlessness, her separation from him, and their meeting in England.

Then he told of his suspicions of her second crime, and the grounds upon which he based them.

Granby Saville sat still as death while Marston Grey spoke.

When he had finished, he sighed deeply, as if awaking from some terrible nightmare.

"Just Heavens!" he cried. "If I had committed some fearful crime I could not have been punished more terribly. Marston Grey, you have done me a great service, but you have broken my heart in doing it."

"Come—come!" exclaimed Grey, "you must not talk of broken hearts. A woman like Clara Mansfield is not worthy of a man's love. Your sorrow will wear off, like any other bad habit, and you will find some good and virtuous woman who will make you happy. A woman who leads a man on by false promises or deceit of any kind, is unworthy of respect, but one who has acted as Clara Mansfield has acted, is hateful—simply hateful."

Without answering, Granby Saville rose to go.

He extended his hand to Grey, then left the room and the house, feeling a stunned sensation, as if some one had struck him a blow.

All that day—all that evening—all that night he walked from street to street, scarcely noticing whither he went, and not once observing the faces of the passers-by.

More than once he passed the bridge spanning the mighty river where so many find a long rest after a sleepless life.

But his sorrow had not yet made him a coward, and he saved himself from the deadly sin of suicide.

At length, wearied out, he sought his chambers, and telling the porter to admit no one, he went up into his room, and flung himself, dressed as he was, on the bed.

"For a few days, at least," he murmured, "I shall be unmolested."

He awoke, to find on his table two notes.

The first ran as follows:

"20, Coleman Street, London.

"10th December, 1845.

"Sir,—The bill for £510 drawn by Mr. Edward Courtenay, and accepted by you, having yesterday been dishonoured at your bankers, I have to inform you that unless the same be paid by twelve o'clock to-morrow at our office as above, a writ will at once issue against you for the amount. Yours, &c.,
"ISRAEL SOLOMONS & Co."

Granby threw it down impatiently.

It was no surprise.

The second was:

"MY DEAR SIR,—Enclosed you will find a cheque for eighteen hundred pounds, which will, I hope, more than cover your liabilities. You can repay me when you are Marquis of Castleton, which you will be some day. I have set two good detectives on the track of this John Shadow. They hope to catch him.

"Yours ever, "MARSTON GREY."

"Generous fellow!" murmured Granby Saville, in a voice almost suffocated by emotion.

He eyed the cheque wistfully, hesitatingly.

Then, with a firm step, he walked to his desk, wrote a short note, and enclosed the cheque, directing the envelope to Marston Grey.

"No, no!" he cried, "this must not be. Why should I incur a debt to him rather than to these Jew money-lenders? No, if any have to wait, let them wait, not him."

Marston Grey smiled and sighed when he received the cheque back.

"Well, well," he said, "the fellow has courage! Hang me, foolish as it is to reject a kindness, I think, under the circumstances, I should have done the same thing myself!"

Granby Saville remained in town until his arrest was every hour imminent.

Then, one evening, he packed up the few articles which were absolutely necessary, and was just placing in his extempore knapsack some loose papers, when his eye caught an hotel bill.

It was headed—"The Prince of Wales Inn, Burnley Bridge, near Thornton." It was dated but a few days back, and was that given to John Shadow at the tavern where he had borrowed the horse on the night of his visit to the cemetery.

"Ah!" cried Granby Saville, "to me all roads have but one ending. This may give me some clue to the whereabouts of that villain Shadow, or, at any rate, of his reasons for going to Thornton. What could have induced him to start off thither without mentioning it to me?"

So the train which reached Thornton at eight, carried with it Granby Saville, with no more luggage than his light knapsack.

He got out at Thornton Station, because he had no conception where the Prince of Wales Hotel was situated, and the train had already started when he found that a walk was before him of nearly ten miles.

Refreshing himself with a moderate quantity of brandy at the Holly Farm Inn, he walked along the road rapidly, passing with but a careless look the dreary old house which was the home of his ancestors.

On along the road he went, never tiring, but feeling a kind of desperate satisfaction at thus breasting the cold air of December.

Suddenly he came to a spot where three roads met.

There was the signpost—that silent guide to the wayfarer—standing in the centre of this confluence of highways; but there was no possibility of reading its warnings.

So he stood bewildered, and would have continued to do so, perhaps, had he not seen, emerging suddenly from one of the lanes, two persons.

He could not distinguish who and what they were, and, fearing lest they might have designs upon his purse, prepared to act on the defensive.

As they came nearer, however, he saw that the couple consisted of a man and a little girl.

How they were dressed, or to what station of life they belonged, it was impossible in the darkness to distinguish; but he determined to address them, and gather, if he could, some idea of his position.

"Will you oblige me, sir, by telling me my nearest way to Burnley Bridge," he asked, in his gentlest voice.

The man drew back hastily, and seemed somewhat alarmed by this sudden apparition from behind the signpost.

"Fear not," cried Granby, "I am simply a traveller from Thornton."

"I know the way," said the man, in an undecided, but by no means unpleasant voice, "but I can't say I can well tell you. I'm going there myself, and will show you the place, if you'll come with me a few yards down yonder lane, where I'm going to rest awhile."

Granby Saville gladly accepted the invitation of his new friend, and walked at his side until they arrived at a small house of entertainment, where they entered and sat down.

Here he had an opportunity of inspecting the strange appearance of his companions. The result of this inspection decided him that he had fallen in with two of Nature's oddities, or two children of misfortune.

(To be continued.)

OUR CHRISTMAS STORY.

THE DARK DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

A STORY IN FOUR PARTS.—PART IV

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORY BETWEEN THE BELLS.

It was Christmas morning.

Just over the tips of the snow-covered trees in the park at Crayfield, the sun was rising grandly, melting the black shadows of night into lakes of gorgeous colour, and spanning the horizon with patches of lurid light.

The wind blew with wholesome vigour from the north, shaking the frosty rime from the branches of the old trees, and sweeping the open places to an even crispness that glittered in the morning rays.

The only sounds of life were the twittering of the awakened birds, the bleating of the sheep in the fold, and the lowing of the cattle in the farmyards and out-houses.

The village was not yet astir; for it was a day of rest, and the earth, covered with its white garment, asked nothing of the husbandman.

But as the church-clock proclaimed the hour, the watch-dogs barked at each other in mutual recognition, and their deep baying seemed the first real harbinger of the awakening day.

Another hour passed, and the signs of life began to multiply. Cottage doors opened, and the well-washed faces of men, women, and children, looked out upon the winter prospect, and smiled a cheery welcome to the great festival.

In high glee were the children. What a bright, beautiful day to them seemed this great anniversary! It had to them a reality which fades away as the child becomes a man, and sent a thrill of pleasure through their young hearts, as though Christmas day were a great, tangible gift, be handed and joyed over, and not a few fleeting hours devoted to the celebration of a wondrous fact in the world's history.

And now, as the winter sun rises higher in the heavens, and seems to grow colder as the freckled,

fleecy clouds hide half its brightness, come the carol-singers. They are a gay little troop of village children, dressed in their Sunday attire, and ruddy with health and happiness; and as they turn the corner of a lane that leads into the village street, they halt, and commence with one voice a simple carol to an old, old tune, that easily explains their errand.

The villagers come to the cottage doors, and listen reverently, and from that decent house opposite, a little lady messenger skips out lightly, and gives to the tallest of the children a silver piece wrapped carefully in paper.

So the little troop of carol-singers wends its way through the village, and turning round by the churchyard wall, strikes off across the fields to the Gables.

They look timidly back at one part of this wall, however; for they know that the light piercing through the iron gratings falls upon something there that makes them shudder to think of!

Their light hearts soon forget this solemn something, as they tramp merrily over the snow; and presently they scurry up the avenue that leads to the manor-house, and stand in a semicircle before the great door, with the deep porch, and the huge, heavy knocker.

As their young voices swell out in cheerful unison, a step is heard in the hall, and Agnes Markham, throwing open the great door, smiles upon them sweetly but sadly. They cease their carolling, and curtsy with great perseverance.

"That will do, my good little children," she says, and to each one she hands a bright little gift from a basket she carries on her arm.

Behind her comes Greville Markham.

"At your good deeds again Agnes," he says. "Well, it's a catching goodness."

And he distributes the contents of his waistcoat-pocket amongst the little singers.

They curtsy again, and trip away down the avenue. The great door is shut, and Agnes and Greville stand in the hall, talking in low tones.

"All will be well, my darling," says Greville, fondly. "I had a bright dream last night—and though dream are not facts, that dream has somehow lightened my heart, and made me look hopefully to the future. Come here, Agnes."

He draws her as nearly as he can beneath the great bunch of mistletoe, and under that mystic bough a something happens which the mistletoe is supposed especially to sanction.

Then Greville finds occupation in the sporting implements disposed about the hall, and Agnes leaves him.

They had risen early that morning at the Gables; for the events of the previous day had overwhelmed them with anxiety. The stranger whom Agnes had found in the hut in the plantation had brought with him a world of care, and made the house a house of mingled sorrow and hopefulness. He was a melancholy Christmas visitor; but he came to clear up a mystery which had for many years hung about him and his kindred like a shadow, and been the one alloy to an all but perfect felicity.

It was to him that Agnes went when she left her lover.

He was paler and sadder-looking than when we last saw him, as a visitor to the Greyhound, and a hunted fugitive in the old chalk-pit. But the night's rest had restored his vigour, and he was calm, and even self-possessed.

He was telling Agnes the story of his long exile.

"You were a little child, Agnes," he said, when this great wrong tore me away from you. The last I saw of you, my darling, was on that dreadful day. Do you recollect it?"

"Faintly, dear father," murmured Agnes.

"They let me take your little hand, and stroke your golden hair, and whisper a blessing upon you from the depths of my broken heart. I smothered your innocent, wondering face with kisses, and when in your prattling way you said, 'Why don't you come with us, papa?—Mamma's crying!' I turned away speechless; and so I left you and your poor mother!" There was something wonderful in the self-control with which Agnes listened to these words. She had prayed for strength during the night, and God had given it to her.

"It is too miserable a story, my dear child," said the father. "I had better leave it untold!"

"No, no!" said Agnes; "I can bear it. I shall be happier when I know all!"

She said this so firmly, so resolutely, that the father was deceived. He could not discern the terrible heart-pangs that Agnes struggled against. He went on: "You may remember that your mother left you suddenly—left you here in the care of your uncle?"

Agnes bowed her head in token of acquiescence. "She left you to follow me. Over the wide, weary ocean she came to lighten my misery, and to share my disgrace. She felt—she knew that I was innocent!"

"And she is now —"

John Markham paused—paused with bitter anguish before he answered the half-spoken question.

"She is now, my child, in heaven!"

A peal of Christmas bells rang out at this moment. Borne faintly on the wind, they seemed like heavenly messengers, indeed!

"But she came to you—you saw her?"

"Agnes, I never saw her again alive!"

Agnes walked to the window, and looked out upon the trees and the snow, and there came across her eyes a film that mocked her self-imposed calmness. But when she turned again towards her father, her eyes were dry, and she sat down with a constrained firmness that was little less than a miracle.

"I can hear the rest, father," she said. "I have often wondered why my poor mother did not come back to me."

It was the first time for these many long years that John Markham was able to tell the story that hung upon his lips, and seemed to beg for a sympathising listener. So, forgetful of the terrible emotion to which it must necessarily give rise in one so deeply interested as his daughter, he talked on.

"Your pure mind, Agnes, cannot conceive the degrading reality of my position. It is summed up in the simple words—'I was a convict!'"

Agnes shuddered in spite of herself.

"Working in my prison-dress, surrounded by hardened ruffians, to whom the idea of any one of their fellows being an innocent man was only an incentive to coarse and scoffing brutality, I was, one well-remembered day, suddenly called aside by an officer. 'Here's a letter for you!' he said. I seized the letter eagerly, and, stepping aside with him, looked anxiously at the superscription. It was in your mother's handwriting. I opened it, and read words that fell upon my soul like a refreshing balm. She had lauded and was coming to see me. That very day I was to see her!"

"I returned to my wretched companions, so happy, that, as I placed the letter in my bosom, and pressed it to my heart, they observed the change in my demeanour, and jeered me upon it.

"'Nothing else than a free pardon,' said one, sneeringly.

"'A thousand a year and a park,' said another, 'with all us lags to help him enjoy it!'

"I was silent. I could bear their coarse remarks, for your mother, I thought, was coming to me. However, one stalwart ruffian attempted to thrust his hand beneath my blouse, and take the letter from me. He persisted, and, seizing him by the throat, I flung him off, and kicked him away, as he struggled to clutch at me. There was a general rush towards me then, and I was taken away and put into close confinement!"

Agnes rose, and pouring herself out a glass of water from a decanter that stood on a side-table, drank it eagerly. She had not been talking; but her throat was dry and parched.

"In that close confinement," continued John Markham, "I remained for three days. Three days and nights without a moment's sleep, and with your mother's letter burning, as it were, in my bosom, and maddening me! She was waiting for me, God knows where, and between us were the prison walls!"

"The three days passed, and then the officer who had brought the letter, came to me. There was something I could not understand, in his dry, caustic way of telling me—I was wanted!"

"I followed him. He was silent till we had passed the strictly penal part of the colony, and then he spoke:

"'Was that letter written by your wife?' he asked.

"'Yes,' I replied, eagerly.

"'You should have kept out of a mess, then, and you'd have liked the appointment better, perhaps.'

"'What did he mean?

"He said nothing further; but we walked on till we reached a range of miserable houses, occupied by the free settlers and the paroled convicts, who ministered to the wants of the penal colony. At one of these houses my conductor halted, knocking at the door with a life-preserver he carried when off duty.

"The door was opened by a wretched old hag, whose face I shall never forget. Low, debauched cunning stamped every line of it, and her small wicked eyes looked out from beneath a sharp, bushy eyebrow, such as I had never before seen on the face of a woman.

"She glanced at me with a tigerish ferocity that—used as I was to villainous countenances—made me shudder.

"'Is this him?' she asked, addressing my conductor.

"The officer nodded.

"'I've set out the place nicely,' she muttered; 'and she looks beautiful!'

"My heart jumped at the words, but a horrid sus-

picion seemed to arrest its beating, and I was cold—deadly cold.

"'She couldn't be more beautiful,' continued the old lady, 'if—if—'

"'There, that'll do,' said my guide, impatiently; 'I've no time to waste over your howling. Show us the way.'

"The old woman scowled at the officer, and cast a glance of intense malignity at me. Then she led the way to an inner room.

"She took some time to unlock the door of this room, and when the door was opened, the place was still in partial darkness. I was too bewildered to speak, but, as I pressed forward, the horrid suspicion that made my blood run cold, was increased in intensity.

"I saw something white in a corner of the room, on a kind of dresser. I was rooted to the spot, but my eyes seemed to start from my head, and cling to that white sheet.

"I never knew how I approached it. All I recollect was a flood of light that suddenly burst into the room, and revealed all. I saw your mother's white, upturned face. She was dead! The three days' delay had killed her!"

The Christmas bells still pealed out, cheerily giving note in honour of the great Birthday. "Ding-dong!" they went, the lusty hands that pulled the ropes pulling all the more heartily for the good Christmas cheer that awaited them. "Ding-dong, ding-dong!" they clattered, till the old belfry trembled again, and the birds started out of the ivy in alarmed wonder.

John Markham had finished his story. He was leaning over his daughter, chafing her hands and cooling her forehead.

She had fainted.

"Agnes, my dear child," he whispered, tenderly smoothing back her golden hair. "Agnes—Agnes! God help me! she seems all but lifeless!"

Presently the blue eyes opened, and Agnes uttered a few simple words in partial consciousness.

"Mother—poor, poor mother!"

Then she passed her white hand across her brow, and looked earnestly about her. She was recalling to her mind a question she had all the time asked herself.

She clutched her father's hand hysterically, and said:

"And you, father—what is it that makes this visit a mystery? You—you are free?"

Again, in the silence, rang out the Christmas bells. There was no other answer.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORY MADE CLEARER.

The story partly told by John Markham to his daughter, may as well be rendered plain to the reader in a brief narrative of the events that led to his conviction at the Maidstone Assizes, fifteen years ago, and his consequent deportation to a penal settlement.

He was the younger brother of Mr. Vincent Markham, upon whom, of course, the strictly entailed estates of the Markhams had descended; and, as a younger son, he inherited but a slender portion, which he was to eke out by the profession of arms. His father bought for him a commission in a line regiment, fitted him out, and shortly afterwards died suddenly of an acute disease.

On his death-bed, he had spoken to his younger son of his prospects.

"John, my boy," he said "the doctors tell me it's all but over! and I wish to give you a few words of advice. Stick to your profession, and be steady. Don't be in a hurry to marry. It will be time enough for you to think of a wife when you're a captain or a lieutenant-colonel. Vincent will, no doubt, help you to purchase your steps. Indeed, I shall lay my injunction upon him to do so."

The dying man was not aware that his son was already secretly married!

John Markham was a hot-headed, imprudent young man, and the first pretty face that smiled upon him he fell desperately in love with, and took to himself.

Some time after the father's death, this secret marriage came to the ears of the elder brother, and he was not backward in expressing his disapprobation of it.

"You've beggared yourself, John," he said; "a wife is only an incumbrance to a man in your position."

John Markham resented this interference in a somewhat haughty manner, and the brothers were all but estranged.

About the time of Agnes's birth, the young lieutenant was ordered abroad with his regiment, and, under the circumstances, he was compelled reluctantly to leave his wife and child in England. He took for them a pretty little house in the neighbourhood of Crayfield, and, after a sorrowful parting, went with his regiment to Canada.

It happened that Mrs. John Markham had, in her maiden days, a devoted admirer in the person of a well-to-do young farmer, whose lands adjoined those belonging to the manor-house. This young farmer was terribly cut up when he found that a rival had borne off the prize he coveted, and he had been heard to say some very harsh things of John Markham in consequence, and to talk loudly of what he was pleased to call the deceit of the young wife.

When, however, the coast was clear by the departure of the husband, he took it into his head to persecute the wife with his unmanly and unwelcome addresses. He was not bold enough to come to the house; but when Mrs. Markham ventured abroad, he not unfrequently met her, and forced upon her his conversation and his unwelcome importunities.

She bore this for some time, and then at last sat down and wrote a letter to her husband, plainly telling him of the annoyance, and deploring the fact that he was not present to protect her. It was an indiscreet thing to do to a husband so situated, and possessed of so hot a temper as John Markham. He thought little of his commission in comparison with the woman he loved, and as he could not obtain leave of absence, he sold out in a hurry, and came hastily home.

He took his measures in a way peculiarly his own. He did not even advise his wife of his coming; and when, after his long journey, he reached Crayfield, he had his luggage taken to the Greyhound, and especially warned the landlord to say nothing of his arrival.

After some slight rest and refreshment, he paid a stealthy visit to the pretty cottage that held all that was dear to him. He had a hard struggle to keep his hand from the gate; but he mastered his emotions.

"Not yet," he said. "If I see her now, she will dissuade me from my purpose, and I can't rest till I've thrashed the scoundrel."

He had a hunting-whip in his hand, and when he was out of earshot of the cottage, he kept smacking this whip, and passing the thong between his fingers, with singular satisfaction.

"This," he said, will be a mild means of repaying him."

As he walked on, a miserable scarecrow figure left a stile upon which it was leaning and approached him.

"Mercy on us, Master Markham! be it you come home again?" exclaimed the intruder.

John Markham had peculiar reasons for not wishing to be recognized at that moment, and quite unguardedly, he replied:

"You are wrong, old man. Get out of my path!" And he smacked the hunting-whip carelessly at the strange figure before him.

The old man cowered back into the hedge, muttering:

"It's him—I know it's him! What makes him deny it?"

John Markham pursued his way, ignorant that the village mendicant was following him at a safe distance, and he smacked his whip louder than ever as he approached a substantial old-fashioned farmhouse adjacent to the road.

He walked up to the house and pulled at a bell, the sound of which made the watch-dog bark vigorously.

As it happened, the man he sought was approaching the house, too, from an opposite direction, and they met on the threshold.

The young farmer started back when he saw who his visitor was.

"Grayson," said John Markham, "I want a few words with you."

The farmer quailed.

"With me?"

"With you. As I have no wish to enter your house, perhaps you will favour me by walking in this direction."

The farmer looked at the whip, and had an inkling of what was to come. He thought it better to settle the matter beyond the range of his premises, so he mutely assented, and walked with John Markham in the direction pointed out.

A few hundred paces brought them to a plantation, where, as they thought, they were secluded from all eyes.

They were mistaken. The old scarecrow figure was hiding behind a tree, near enough to hear their voices.

"Grayson," said John Markham, calmly, but with a nervous twitching about his lips, "I hear that you insult my wife by your unmanly importunities. I've come over, all the way from Canada, to hear from your own lips whether this is true or not."

"I certainly," said Grayson, hesitatingly, "have—have spoken to her."

"Upon what subject?"

The farmer was completely brought to bay. He

could not well name the subject, and he was too greatly agitated to be ready with a lie.

"Speak, man!" said John Markham, impatiently. "This won't do, Markham!" exclaimed Grayson, desperate in the toils. "I'm not a man to be bullied!"

"But you are a man to be horsewhipped!" And John Markham raised the whip.

The farmer was too wise to wait. He rushed at his assailant, and as they were two strong, athletic men, they struggled long for the mastery.

It was a wild, scrambling contest, in which the whip took no part. They hugged each other, and reeled hither and thither, till at length Grayson fell heavily, stunned by his head striking against a tree.

John Markham looked down at his fallen opponent. "I can't lash him now!" he said; and turning away, he walked towards Grayson's house.

He had forgotten his whip. It was lying on the ground by Grayson's side.

He pulled again at the farmhouse bell; and when it was answered, he told the domestic that his master was in the plantation, and might want him.

He did this for humanity's sake, and then hastened off to his unexpected wife and child.

It was a happy meeting. Nothing was talked of but the pangs of the long, long separation, and the joys of the unexpected return. The father took his fair child on his knee, and kissed it, and fondled over it for hours.

He had all but forgotten Grayson, lying stunned in the wood!

The little girl was just prattling her prayers at the bedside, with mother and father leaning over her, listening delightedly.

The clean, snowy-capped maid came up, and said: "Please, sir, you're wanted below."

A whirlwind of thought passed through John Markham's brain? He was wanted. What for?

He went down, and rough hands were laid upon him. Grayson had been found dead in the plantation—his purse and his pocket-book gone, and his head bleeding from a wound inflicted by some blunt weapon. The riding-whip that John Markham had carried was found by his side, and on the heavy handle of the whip there were stains of blood, and a few short, black hairs!

John Markham never entered his cottage-home again, and how he saw his wife for the last time has been told by himself in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER XIV. BRIGHTENING UP.

MR. WATSON, the justice's clerk, although a lawyer and a devoted grubber in his profession, was capable of much sleep, and on this particular Christmas morning, he slept,—as the phrase goes—like a top. The carol-singers did not wake him, and the bells did not wake him; and even when Mrs. Watson tweaked his nose, and pulled at the top-knot of his nightcap, as though it were a bell-pull, and he had a bell somewhere in the interior of his headpiece, he only snored the louder, and turned his head into his pillow, to defy interruption.

Now, Mrs. Watson, although she respected her husband as a lawyer—for she was a shrewd practitioner herself—held him in but small esteem as a man and a husband; and when she found that his nose was insensible to tweaking, and the top-knot of his nightcap conveyed no very clear ideas to his brain, she bethought her of other remedies.

She was accustomed to keep a bottle of smelling-salts at the bedside, and these salts were of a most pungent character, and remarkably irritating to the delicate lining of the olfactory organ. The man that could sleep with this volatile salt at his nose must have been Morpheus himself!

She knew this, and chuckled as she grasped the bottle. She expected Mr. Watson to spread out with the shock, and mentally explode like a cracker.

She extended her arm gently round his shoulder, and then, carefully removing her thumb from the mouth of the bottle—in figurative language—let him have it!

A start, and a great sneeze, as though a water-pipe had burst, were the only signs made by Mr. Watson. He then coolly turned over, and tried to sleep again.

Mrs. Watson was dumbfounded. In doubt, she incautiously smelt the salts herself, and fell back, weeping like Niobe!

"The man's got a nose like an inspector of nuisances," she said. "It can stand anything!"

She then bethought her of another weapon. Her voice was naturally high-pitched, and when she was angry, she had been known to run up quite out of the gamut.

"Mr. Watson!" she said, shrilly; "what do you mean! Are you aware that the squire's man's been down for you this half-hour?"

The voice was more pungent than the salts, probably because it was more familiar. The lawyer seemed to sniff it from afar off; and he turned lazily, and mumbled:

"Mean, my dear, mean? I don't know what I mean. Is it freezing?"

"Is what freezing, Mr. Watson?" I've been trying to wake you this half-hour, and whether it's freezing or shining, or anything else, you're wanted at the Gables.

"My dear," said the lawyer, childishly, "I've been dreaming that this was Christmas day, and that I had a writ out against the turkey, and a perpetual injunction upon the plum-pudding, for disagreeing with people."

"Watson!" exclaimed the wife severely, "You're a fool!"

The lawyer had subsided again into a half-slumber, in which he muttered:

"Fool is a word tending to provoke a breach of the peace. It is so laid down in—"

"Mr. Watson," exclaimed the lawyer's better-half, now fairly aroused, "if you're going to talk to me out of your law-books, I'll pull every atom of sheet off you!"

And she proceeded to put her threat into execution.

The lawyer, feeling the cold air stealing upon him after an unwonted fashion, started up, and endeavoured to reimprison his fleeting calorific.

"Milly!" he said, "why, what—what are you doing?"

"Waking you, to be sure; you won't get up without. And there's a man waiting below to take you up—yes, to take you up!—to the manor-house."

What the smelling-salts and the shrill voice were unable to bring about, the cold air had effected. Mr. Watson tumbled out of bed, and, making a hurried toilet, went off with the squire's man to the Gables.

He shivered a good deal, and grumbled to himself somewhat; but when he reached the manor-house, the mere individual subsided, and the attorney-at-law stood out in professional shrewdness.

He was ushered into the justice-room. He there found Mr. Markham jotting down some rough notes on a sheet of paper.

"Good-morning, Watson," said the squire. "I'm sorry to drag you out of your bed, and on Christmas morning, too. By-the-by, the compliments of the season to you."

"A merry Christmas to you, sir," returned the lawyer.

"I'm afraid, Watson, it will not be a very merry Christmas to me. I wish Christmas was the day after to-morrow, or the middle of next week, or anywhere else, till the business I want to talk to you about is settled."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes. I must tell you at once, Watson, that my brother John has returned to England. Indeed, I may tell you that he is in this house!"

The lawyer looked concerned.

"Not only," said Mr. Markham, "is he here under very peculiar circumstances, that you may probably be aware of; but he's here, with another millstone about his neck, in the shape of a new charge!"

The lawyer put on his spectacles.

"I heard something of this," he said, "last night, and I expected it, from the examination yesterday."

"You did? Well, then what is to be done?"

"The charge must be met, somehow. The first thing to do, I think, is to sift the old matter, according to the instructions in the packet found on old Sam, which you sealed up yesterday. As to the new matter, there's no evidence of any value. Prove that John Markham is innocent of the one crime—and I now believe thoroughly he is—and the other suspicion will go for nothing. But while he is looked upon as a guilty man in the one case, all the world will be ready to brand him as a criminal in the other!"

The squire seemed greatly relieved by this expression of sound opinion, and he brightened up as he said:

"That's well expressed, Watson. You've lifted a load from my heart, and I thank you."

He shook the lawyer's hand heartily.

"That packet," he said, "contained suggestions that we can do no harm by following up."

"None at all—at least with witnesses."

"True—with witnesses. And whom shall they be?"

"The constable, and the landlord of the Greyhound."

"What a thing it is, Watson, to be a lawyer," said the squire. "I should have gone about this matter like a bull at a gate, blind to the consequences, so that I hit my mark. You see you've made me quite jocular. Have you breakfasted?"

"No," said the lawyer. He recollected that about that time Mrs. Watson would be monopolizing the strong coffee, and mercilessly confiscating the savoury

slices of toast in revenge for the trouble she had had to awake him!

"Then perhaps you'll take a hurried cup of coffee with me? And after that we'll proceed to business."

The lawyer bowed assent. He was very glad of a cup of coffee—even a hurried one—on that raw Christmas morning.

They breakfasted alone; for Greville had started out for a stretch over the snow-clad fields, to give his great dog a run, and himself an airing, and Bella was waiting in her room for Agnes, who, as we are pretty well aware, was not quite fit to meet a breakfast party.

As Mr. Markham and the lawyer sat sipping their coffee, the former said:

"Suppose we find these things in the places that mysterious paper points out, what steps shall we then take?"

"We must lay them before the Home Secretary, with the necessary affidavits."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime, your position as a justice of the peace—if you like to pledge it—will secure your brother from molestation."

"But from what I can understand, his presence in this country is in itself a crime?"

"Make yourself easy upon that point, sir. The proofs of his innocence will materially alter the complexion of his escape. His fifteen years' sufferings will count for something."

The squire now left the breakfast-table.

"In five minutes, Watson, I shall be ready," he said. "Mind you bring the packet with you."

"I locked it in the iron-safe," replied the lawyer. And he went to the justice-room.

He took the packet from the safe, and would have opened it. But the justice's seal was inviolable.

"A strange business," he said, "and for Christmas morning, too. But a better day could scarcely be found to prove an innocent man not guilty!"

"Now, then!" exclaimed the squire, buoyantly entering the room.

And they left the house, and walked rapidly down the avenue.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEARCH IN THE STABLES.

THE bells had, for a time, ceased to ring out in the old church tower, and the ringers had departed for their homes, none the worse in the matter of appetite for their early labours. But the sexton and the clerk were inside the sacred building, arranging the few last boughs of holly and laurel that were to give a seasonable cheerfulness to the ancient pile, and celebrate in a holy place what they symbolized by the domestic fireside.

Opposite to the church the signboard of the Greyhound swung to and fro in the north wind, and exhibited on either side the much-attenuated body of the keen-sighted animal which gave a name to the hostelry.

As it happened, the snow had frozen hard and thick upon the outlines of this pictured Greyhound; for the sun of many summers had cracked the paint, and made a corrugated surface favourable to any kind of flying deposit. The result was that the Greyhound was eccentrically patched with a kind of swansdown that made him look woolly, and not unlike a badly-cut poodle. Only that the Greyhound's head, reaching out afar, caused him to seem like a poodle immensely illustrating Dr. Darwin's theory as to the Origin of Species, and becoming something else.

The tavern was closely and hermetically sealed up, as was proper on the morning of Christmas day, and the landlord was enjoying his leisure hours till the minister had begun and finished his sermon.

He was discussing with his wife at the breakfast-table the strange accident that had befallen the pig overnight, when an authoritative tap at the door disturbed his theories upon the subject.

He fancied that it was the police, paying their formal visit to see that there were no unlicensed toppers on the premises. But he was mistaken. His visitors were nothing less than Mr. Markham, the justice, Mr. Watson, the lawyer, and the village constable.

"We wish," said the former, "with your permission, to search certain places in your stables."

The pig that had grunted out his life overnight in those stables at once occupied a prominent place in the landlord's mind. But Diggle had had the pig removed, and it was on its way to become "prime breakfast bacon" in a London market.

He was too obsequious, however, to give vent to his thoughts, and saying: "Certainly, your worship!" he led the way to the stables.

An old horse was munching his morning meal as the little party entered, and he turned his head lazily over the partition to fix two dull, vacant eyes upon them.

The lawyer now unsealed the packet, but as he was doing so, he said:

"We wish you, landlord, and you, constable, to witness what we are doing, so that we may have your evidence should it be wanted. I will first, however, read to you a part of this paper."

He unfolded the greasy packet, and putting on his spectacles, read as follows:

"In the stables at the Greyhound, behind a loose brick over the door, I hid the purse."

The landlord stared.

"We will now," continued the lawyer, "look for that loose brick."

A horse-block was found, placed by the door, and the lawyer mounted.

There, plainly enough, as the paper stated, was a brick, which might be called loose, for it moved as the lawyer passed his finger over it.

The justice was deeply agitated.

"Can you get it out, Watson?" he asked, eagerly.

"Not, I think, without a chisel, or a knife, or something of that kind."

"Here's a knife, sir," said the constable.

Mr. Watson took the knife, and scraped away the mortar and rubble, and then, by a careful system of leverage, prised the brick out. It was only half a one, and left a considerable cavity behind. He passed the half-brick to the constable, and smiling at the justice, said, with some humour,

"A very favourable opening."

"Very!" replied the squire.

He could be quiet no longer, and he jumped up beside the lawyer.

Mr. Watson took the knife by the extreme point of the handle, and carefully passed it about the orifice. It entangled itself in something that clung to it!

"It's here, safe enough!" said the lawyer, quietly drawing forth an old netted purse, with two rusty rings upon it.

He held the purse on the point of the knife, and descended.

"Thank God!" exclaimed the justice. "That's one proof. My life on it, that my brother was innocent!"

"Now," said the lawyer, handing the purse to the constable, and bidding him be careful of it, "I must read further from our instructions."

He unfolded the greasy packet again, and read:

"In a crevice, under the first grating, will be found the pocket-book."

This grating happened to be over the head of the old horse that was staring blankly at their proceedings, and, as he had to be pushed aside, and told to "go over," to make room for Mr. Watson and the horse-block, he was a mute witness of the strange search.

It was some minutes before the crevice could be discovered, for time had partly filled it up, and obliterated it. But presently the knife found an entrance, and a space large enough to hold a pocket-book was discovered.

"There's something," said Mr. Watson, "something soft."

He worked away with the knife, and presently he shifted the impediment.

"A book of some kind, sure enough," he said.

"Have you a hook, or anything to hold it with, landlord?"

The landlord was about to leave the stable, to find the necessary implement. But the lawyer was careful, and stopped him.

"Stay!" he said, "this business must be seen, from first to last, by all of us!"

He tried again with the knife, and managed to obtain a hold. In a careful, methodical way, and with wondrous patience, he at length brought the book to light.

He jumped down with it in his hand.

"Mr. Markham," he exclaimed, "I shall never regret this morning's work. I would rather have lost the best case I ever was engaged in, than have failed to find these two proofs of John Markham's innocence!"

The book was opened, and there was a card in it, on which the name of "Grayson" could yet be deciphered.

The squire was too much agitated to speak; but he seized the lawyer by both hands, and shook them, till the tears in his eyes made him turn away in mute but eloquent silence.

"You are witnesses of this discovery," said Mr. Watson to the landlord and the constable; "and I may now tell you that the man who murdered James Grayson, fifteen years ago, was the wretched creature whose body lies in the deadhouse yonder!"

And he pointed to the old church and wall opposite.

"God forgive him, then!" said the landlord, reverently taking off his cap. "The truth will out!"

"Aye, but it will!" exclaimed the lawyer; "and Providence be praised for it!"

The bells rang out again just then, calling the villagers to church. They came, trooping along in

their Sunday attire, with bright, clean faces, and cheery, sparkling eyes. They came once again to hear the story of the Great Birthday, and to celebrate the event that gave us the name Christmas. And as they entered by the churchyard-gate, they wondered much to see the squire, and the lawyer, and the village constable leaving the Greyhound opposite.

They did not know that, from that hour and on that day, John Markham was born again, as it were, into the world of honest and free men.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE END OF THE DARK DAYS.

A VERY cheerful party assembled in the great dining-room at the Gables to eat a Christmas dinner. At the head of his hospitable table sat the squire, and at his right was his brother, John Markham. On his left was Agnes, all but cured of her tears, but yet subdued by the suddenness of her new-born felicity. Opposite to the squire was his son Greville, casting sly, happy glances at his betrothed, and expressing, by eccentric signs, the pain he felt at the trifling distance between them.

Bella, a shade haughty, as was her wont, was close by Greville's elbow, keeping him, by judicious sisterly nudges, from demonstrating too strongly his impatience at being a bridegroom elect, some few chairs distant from his mistress.

And, wonderful to say, at that Christmas dinner-table, sat Mrs. Watson, the lawyer's wife, looking with amiable placidity at her husband, and assuming her company manners, till her face seemed quite high-life like in the polished surface of the dishcovers.

Mrs. Watson's goose—in a strict, culinary sense—had been cooked some hours before, and her plum-pudding had long ago been taken triumphantly out of the hot water; for she had intended to eat her Christmas-dinner at home, and to wag her best cap at Mr. Watson in token of his morning's misbehaviour.

But fate had disturbed Mrs. Watson's plans. When her husband returned home, after the discoveries at the Greyhound, he said:

"Milly, my dear. We're to go up and dine at the manor-house."

"Mr. Watson," replied Milly, "I really think, from what I have seen and heard of you this Christmas morning, that you must be deranged."

"Deranged or not, Milly, we're to eat our Christmas-dinner at the Gables."

Mrs. Watson began to look serious. Involuntarily she placed her hand to her head, and the awful thought came upon her that her best false front was in the hands of Wiggles the barber!

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Watson, that you are positively invited to dine with Mr. Markham?"

"Positively, Milly."

"And the goose is done, too, and the pudding's in the copper."

"Never mind the goose and the pudding. The servants can eat them."

"The servants, Mr. Watson, are on board wages."

"But this is Christmas, you know, and they can put their board wages in their pockets, and dine at our expense, as we are going to dine at the expense of somebody else."

The commercial equality of this proposition seemed to strike Mrs. Watson; so when the goose was done, she set off its tougher members and sent them to the kitchen, and did the same with a rough outside angle of the Christmas pudding.

It was in this way that the lawyer and his wife came to sit at the squire's table.

It was fortunate that Mrs. Watson was present, for her excessively polite behaviour afforded a diversion that prevented the Markhams from dwelling too closely upon the serious events of the past, and the hopes of the future. At the dinner-table she was wonderful; and the way in which she upraised her hands and said, "Oh, dear no, thank you!" when a second piece of turkey was offered her, and which she was dying to have, made Greville all but choke himself, and Bella hide her face in her handkerchief!

But it was when the squire said, "Mrs. Watson, a glass of sherry with you," that the farce was at its acme. The honour was so great, and the glass was so full, and Mrs. Watson was so politely dignified, that, what with the wine she spilt down her stomach, and what fell upon the table-cloth, she was all but baulked of drinking anything; and the raw blushes that came upon her countenance when she saw the mess she had made, warmed even John Markham, sitting seriously by his brother's side, into a glow of subdued merriment.

When the dinner was over, Greville and Agnes took occasion to make a small, select party of their two selves, upon pretence of seeing to some Christmas arrangements in the hall. They forgot these arrangements, however, and went to the shelter of the deep bay-window, in which we first saw them.

The cold, wintry moon, was rising in the heavens, its clear, silver light shimmering upon the snow in the park, and making a sweet, solemn picture, upon which the lovers gazed for a time in silence.

Greville spoke at length:

"Agnes, my darling," he said, "my dream last night was true. There is now no shadow across the path to the altar. The day we were to be married, will see us married; and you, my love, will be mine, as you were to be!"

Agnes bent her head on his shoulder, and whispered something he could scarcely hear.

"Tell me, Agnes," he continued, "in your own sweet, placid tones, and with your dear blue eyes looking as they have looked, into mine, that this shadow has now departed!"

She turned to him. The pale moon shone upon her face, and cast upon it a sweet angelic pallor, that made her beauty statue-like.

"Greville," she said, faintly, "the shadow has almost faded away. But not quite, love, not quite!"

"Oh, what a thing it is to be in love?" said a voice startling them by its suddenness. "I've been listening, and I say we must have no more of this. Come, Mrs. Watson has choked herself with a raisin, and you're wanted to pat her back, Greville! And there's the charade to play, and the curtain's hung across the drawing-room, all ready, and papa is quite impatient. Come!"

They went into the drawing-room, where a great Christmas log was burning, and vividly lighting up the faces about it. But John Markham was staring straight at the glowing embers, and seeing there strange, weird objects, as though in a dream.

Agnes went to his side, and put her arm about his neck. He started from his reverie, and looked up with eyes full of thankfulness.

"Come," said the squire, "are we to have the charade?"

Agnes shook her head, but Bella persisted.

The three actors—Greville, Agnes, and Bella—went behind the curtain. The word to be elucidated was "Wondering," and it was done with a scene for "wonder," and another in which the very "ring" which Greville was shortly to put on Alice's finger played a part. When this ring appeared, Agnes fairly gave way. She recollected that her father was not in the secret!

She looked at him in strange, mute agony.

His quickened senses detected the cause of her embarrassment.

"Agnes," he said, suddenly intruding on the mimic stage; "I know all. May God's blessing and mine go with you in your new happiness!"

He took Greville's hand, and joined it with his daughter's.

The charade was ended!

The Christmas holly was not yet taken down when Greville and Agnes left the village church at Crayfield as man and wife; and in the cheerful cottage in which Agnes was born, John Markham began his new existence. His innocence was fully proved; but in many lonely hours, when his thoughts were busy with the past, he lived over again the Dark Days before that memorable Christmas!

GEORGE HERBERT.

NATIONAL LIFEBOATS.—The following is a list of the noble services rendered by boats of the National Lifeboat Institution, during the late fearful gales:—Barque Ina, of North Shields, 14 men saved; ship David White Clinton, of New York, 8; fishing-boat of Tenby, 8; schooner Margaret and Jane, of Dublin, 5; barque Duke of Northumberland, 18; fishing-boat of Filey, 2; schooner Economy, of Portmadoc, saved vessel and crew of 5; lugger Vigilant, of Peel, saved vessel and crew of 4; ship Jupiter, of London, 8; schooner Maria, of Amlwch, 4; schooner Harry Russell, of Glasgow, saved vessel and crew, 6; schooner L'Espérance, of Nantes, 2; schooner Elizabeth, of Whitehaven, 4; barque Elizabeth Morrow, of Glasgow, 19; barque Confidence, of Liverpool, 23; total, 125; making a grand total of 352 lives saved by the lifeboats of the institution during the present year alone. Besides these services the lifeboats of the society at Walmer, Eastbourne, Aberystwith, Budehaven, Southport, St. Ives, Lytham, and Fishguard, put off on Thursday and Friday last, in response to signals of distress, with the view of saving life from various vessels, but they were not afterwards required. These services are often attended with as much danger as when the lifeboat brings a shipwrecked crew ashore, the gallant men who man the boats oftentimes being thoroughly exhausted. Indeed, in the case of the Walmer lifeboat the crew were out eleven hours, and returned home nearly perished with cold. Altogether, nearly 14,000 lives have been saved from various wrecks since the first establishment of the Lifeboat Institution, for which it has granted rewards. A boat of its great

life-saving fleet, now numbering 125 boats, is found on nearly every dangerous point of our coast where they can be efficiently worked. As each lifeboat requires about £50 a-year to keep it up effectively, it will at once be seen what annual sum is indispensable to the institution's continued progress in its good work.

THE LOYAL PAGE.

CHAPTER I.

He was a youth with aspect fair,
A handsome person too;
And she possessed a beauty rare,
A heart both warm and true. *Old Ballad.*

In the troubled days of Charles I., things did not pursue such an even tenor as that to which we have been mostly habituated since the accession of her Majesty, Queen Victoria. The phrases of "liberty" and "loyalty," were then common in the mouths of the lieges, the Puritans loudly declaring for the former, and the Cavaliers for the latter, whilst old friendships were being broken up, and a general discontent pervaded the universal mind of the nation. The Duke of Buckingham, notwithstanding the many daring proceedings of which he was the principal promoter, was still the reigning favourite of the sovereign, and although a man capable of great and generous actions, still he was hardly suited for the times in which he lived, and failed to conciliate the favour of the people in anything like an equal degree to that which he enjoyed in the estimation of the monarch. He, however, is to play but a subordinate part in our story, which is founded upon the loves of Amy Redford and Francis Merrimind.

Amy happened to be the only daughter of a fierce fanatic, and had fallen deeply in love with Francis Merrimind, who was a page in the royal household, and who was just as loyal as the father of Amy was the opposite. The distance of Matley Hill from London was considerable, and in those days of wearisome locomotion, the journey to those who were about to travel it, appeared ten times greater than it really was. This, however, was of small consideration in the eyes of Francis Merrimind, whose stout heart and lively disposition, were equal to the task of carrying him through any enterprise which either passion or principle might prompt him to undertake. Accordingly, when he has been least expected, he has mounted Chevalier, now trotted, and now galloped, occasionally at a somewhat startling pace, over the rough roads, and has arrived in the neighbourhood of Matley Hill at a moment so opportune as to enable him to doff his feathered cap with all the grace imaginable to the lovely Amy, who is taking a walk by herself, and at the same time, enjoying in secret, some delicious musings even of Francis.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed in utter astonishment when she beheld him; "how is it that you have come here at such a time? In the name of all that is strange, how is it, Francis, that you have left the court?"

"The court, my dearest dear—"

"But kiss me first, my Amy, love,
Or let my lips kiss you—"

he began to sing as he dismounted from his horse, but she would neither give nor allow him to take a kiss until he had answered her question.

"What! not give me a kiss after galloping hot haste over hill and dale, through mud and mire, to see you, my graceful doe, not one? Well, then, be it so," he continued with a sigh; "but I see, in this, a realization of the old adage that bad news travels fast; and so, notwithstanding all my speed, I have arrived too late to be welcome. Heigho, Chevalier! you should have sped faster, my noble fellow," he said, looking in the face of his horse, and at the same time patting his nobly arched neck.

"I do not understand you, Master Frank," said Amy; "pray, what do you mean? I have heard no evil tidings, and am not likely to hear them here, either—especially regarding you—unless I am honoured with a missive from yourself. Do tell me what has happened?"

"Nothing, Amy; nothing out of the common course of events which chequer, either to the disfigurement or adornment of a cavalier's life at court," said Francis, carelessly, and added, "I have, however, been banished the court by royalty itself."

"Indeed!" cried Amy, and her voice faltered with emotion whilst she asked him the reason of such an unfortunate event.

"Oh, nothing dishonourable, Miss Amy; nothing unbecoming my spirit, position and principles; and so your father may now accept me as his son-in-law; whilst you, yourself, may rely upon the undying affections of a warm heart and a true cavalier."

"But pray tell me what has caused your dismissal," entreated Amy.

"Well, my beloved," returned Frank, his face radiant with cheerfulness and smiles, "a slight affair of

honour. You see, Amy, another page insulted me, and, as a matter of course, we drew our rapiers, when I ran him through the body, to the great displeasure of the king. That is all."

"Well, and quite enough too; but do you think that such an act will serve to help you into the good graces of my father, Francis?" asked Amy.

"I should think it ought," returned Frank. He hates the cavaliers, and to please him further, I shall doff my courtly vestments, lay aside my mannerly airs, have my hair cropped, assume the high-crowned, puritanical hat, and look as sour as the most vinegar-faced fanatic in the world."

"Well, all that may be a great deal, and, no doubt, is a great sacrifice, in your estimation; but do not flatter yourself, Master Frank, that such merely outward changes will satisfy him," said Amy, seriously.

"What! not satisfy him!" exclaimed Frank, and added, "Well, how much more would he expect from a page of his Majesty?"

"Perhaps to think with him; to cast your purposes in the same mould with his; to turn your mind against all corruption and tyranny, and perhaps to enter the field by his side in defence of that sacred word, 'Liberty!'"

"These conditions, methinks, are somewhat hard, Miss Amy; but, even if they were granted, mayhap they would not be deemed sufficient. What think you?"

"It is difficult to say in these unsettled days, and I am aware that men of fixed and stern principles are apt to be exacting towards their enemies," said Amy.

"There, Amy, I concur with you, and I daresay were I to do all I have proposed, I should next be expected to join the worshippers in the conventicle, pour fourth extemporaneous blasts of prayer, denounce every kind of gaiety, eschew all pleasures, abjure the play-house, wear neither silks nor satins, look as grave as a friar, and—why do you shake your pretty head? I am sure these are, generally speaking, the endowments, attributes, virtues, or whatever you like to call them, of a true fanatic?"

"Are they, young man?" exclaimed a voice from behind a clump of trees, whence a tall, strong, stalwart figure emerged, and where he had been all the while, an accidental listener to the conversation we have just reported. "Are they, young man?" he repeated, as he drew nearer to the interlocutors, and continued; "I'll tell thee, master page of royalty, that my daughter Amy has but partly informed thee of the requirements which thy duty and the times ought to make thee perform. Living as thou dost in the atmosphere of a tyrannical court rife with the sons of Belial, either soberness of thought or discretion of speech cannot be expected from thee; but thou mayest not be given over entirely to their complexion of thinking, or utterly lost to the love of God and the salvation of thy country. Think not, however, that thou wilt win my respect, far less my affection, or the unalterable love of my daughter, by trying to throw into ridicule the customs or practices of the good men with whom I think, with whom I consociate, and with whom I shall, God willing, act when the day of darkness covereth this unhappy land. Think not, young man, that it is by the mere change of outward signs, that thou shalt gain the esteem and favour for which thou wouldst seem to be an aspiring candidate. No, no, something greater is required than these. There must be an inward change; the heart must turn itself round, as it were; it must rest its aspirations upon loftier objects than the frivolous pageantries incident to the court favour of a perishing world. Does not the country groan beneath the rod of an oppressor? Is not Prelacy dominant over Presbyterianism as a lion over a lamb? and is not the voice of the afflicted crying aloud in lamentation from the crushing load with which they are borne to the earth? Yes, it is, young man, and the day is not far distant when it will cry louder, and still louder, until it will shake the throne of these kingdoms, and hand over to the doom of destruction those who are now the cause of the waters of Marah being diffused over the land."

This long speech, delivered with a terrible force, produced something more than an ordinary effect upon the airy mind of Master Frank, who listened to it almost without motion, and whose countenance unconsciously assumed a solemnity of expression very different from that with which it was usually enlivened. He heard the father of his beloved Amy further denounce the proceedings of the court, and listened to the vehemence of his fanaticism with astonishment, dashed with something akin to fear. The evil prophecies of Redford were delivered with awful force, whilst there was not a single sentiment which might illumine or relieve the gloomy vaticinations which, sooner or later, were to overshadow the land, and deluge its soil with the commingling blood of the saint and the sinner. Frank was, therefore, glad when he heard him say:

"Enough, however, for this time. Go, young man, and ponder what I have said to thee; suffer not thy footsteps to wander further astray, and do nothing with precipitation. Go, my son, and since thou hast abandoned the court of the wicked, thou shalt be better able to enter upon the consideration of those great things of which I have just spoken. Thou wilt be able to see with a clearer eye the perilous state in which thy country is at present placed, and when thou hast sufficiently weighed the things I have said to thee, return, and thy suit will prosper, more certainly with Amy as it may with me. Take five days for their consideration, and come again to Matley Hill, and we shall be glad to hear that thou hast washed from thy mind the corruption of a court, and replaced it with the purity of a conventicle."

Frank would have replied to this philippic, as he felt that it in some degree grated against his loyalty, but, when he turned his eyes upon the countenance of the lovely Amy, he thought he there read an intimation for him to be silent. Accordingly he mounted his steed, saying, "Fare-you-well, then, Master Redford, for five days, when I shall have weighed thy words in the scales of my philosophy, and again be with you." Then, addressing himself to Amy, he said, in an under-tone, "Good-bye, bye, my love; my Hebe, good-bye," and raising his plumed cap, struck his spurs into the flanks of Chevalier, and gracefully pranced out of sight. "To the hostel of the neighbouring village, now my steed," he said to his horse, "where thy master will endeavour to rest in peace for the night." And so saying, he tried to raise his spirits and shake off the gloomy forebodings of Redford, by chanting to himself the following impromptu verses:

Oh! never was a loyal heart with love so sorely tried
And never yet a loyal heart so stoutly love denied;
My king as for a father dear, I'd fall for in the field,
Though Amy's love is unto me, a charm I cannot yield;
These fanatics, these fanatics, their tempers are so strong,
Their hatred is as black and deep as are their speeches long;
What would they do, had they the power to rule this
troubled land?
God save us all, poor Cavaliers! our blood would soak the sand.

Whilst the genius of the page was thus exercising itself in rhymes, that of Enoch Redford was reflecting on the fierce utterances with which he had almost stunned the senses of the courtly gentleman. "Ha! he has got it now!" so ran his thoughts, "and what I have said, it is to be hoped, will be like fresh seed thrown into a fat soil, and good fruit may come of it. He heard me out with patience and listened with attention. May his heart be turned from the ways of the wicked, and may he see the path of the just and follow it with the will of the patriot."

This hope, however ardently desired to be realized by the fanatical Enoch Redford, was doomed to disappointment; for the page did not, for a single moment, entertain the idea of exchanging the church for the conventicle, nor did he feel that his nature could at all identify itself, in the smallest possible measure, with the gloomy, reserved and austere habits by which most of the puritanical classes distinguished themselves. Besides, his political principles were at total variance with those of the liberty-loving crowd. He had been bred in a court, and never had felt the want of liberty. "Nay," he reasoned with himself, "if I have found the lack of anything, it has been restraint—wholesome restraint—which might have prevented me from falling into many sinful snares, and made me a better man." Here he paused for a while, and was lost in deep meditation, whilst he allowed the reins to fall loose on the neck of Chevalier, whose gentle trot had degenerated into a slow walk. "Would I were married!" the page recommenced; "I think I should be a happier man. Amy is certainly lovely; as certainly is she good; and still more certainly is she true. Would I were married! Her father is violent, to be sure, and utterly dislikes the court and the king; he, also, abhors the church, and would anathematize the whole hierarchy. But what of that? He is sincere, brave and resolute. His honesty is transparent, and he worships his Maker with a fervour which I, alas! shall never feel. Oh! poor me! what am I to do? In love with a Puritan's daughter, burning to get wedded, and now have no means to support a wife if I had her. But no matter; the course of true love, they say, never did run smooth, and Amy I shall have, and my place at court, too." So saying, he urged Chevalier into a sharper pace, and was soon within the walls of the village hostelry.

The King's Head was a small inn, although its rooms were large; and although it could not furnish forth the many conveniences and comforts which even a second or third rate "house of entertainment" can now-a-days place at the command of the tourist, it was possessed of sufficient means of accommodation to supply something more than the ordinary wants of the passing traveller. The village in which it was situated was generally a loyal village, and the more re-

spectable or richer classes in its neighbourhood, were mostly supporters of the Crown and the Church, and some of the more ardent of these, occasionally discovered the vehemence of their party-spirit, by opposing the fanatical zeal of the Puritans with a determination which, in many instances, at any rate equalled, if it did not surpass, the intemperate conduct of these long-winded sermonizers. Of this state of things, however, the present mood of the mind of Francis was not such as to take any notice. He felt himself failing inwardly, and whether it was from the effect of his long journey; his conversation with his beloved Amy, or from the extreme length of the lecture of Enoch Redford, he could not tell; but, at all events, he was mighty hungry, and in capital condition to do ample justice to whatever viands the host of the King's Head might set before him. Accordingly, he ordered all the substantialities which the house could afford to produce. Fish, flesh, and fowl were despatched with amazing rapidity. Nearly the whole of a huge loaf of fine home-made bread was almost unconsciously cut down by himself, and the whole was washed down his throat with such a quantity of liquor, that he soon felt himself wonderfully strengthened, although confessedly defeated in the furious onslaught which he had made upon the eatables. He now relinquished the knife and fork, requested the things to be removed, and ordered a bottle of wine to assist his digestion, and tranquillize his mind, before he should retire to rest his weary limbs in the chamber of Somnus. By-and-by, the lights began to double their number in his eyes, and as he felt his imaginative faculties fast rising superior to the calmer energy of his judgment, he bethought himself, that it was time to introduce himself to his bed, where he happily found himself all right and safe on the following morning.

CHAPTER II.

The church bells ring, the king has come,
And ere the Duke of B—
Blow loud your trumpets, beat your drums,
We'll have a jubilee!

Loyal Song.

The enthusiasm of the obscure rhymist—one can hardly call him poet—who has supplied us with the above motto, might have been one of the loyal inhabitants of Kingsholme, which was the name of the village in which the page was now sojourning, and which was only a short distance from Daccleton House, a country residence of the Duke of Buckingham. Early in the morning, the tongues of the church-bells had been joyously put in motion. Ding, dong; ding, dong; ding, dong! resounded far and near in the ears of the usually quiet inhabitants who dwell in this part of England; and who, notwithstanding the differences of opinion which, on certain topics, existed among several of them: they on the whole demeaned themselves towards each other discreetly, and forbore the violence of any more deadly weapons than such as could be executed by the volubility and virulence of the noisy member of the mouth. This, however, was sometimes carried to a pitch of great wrathfulness, especially by the fanatics, whose denunciations of earthly kings and oppressors; of prelates and episcopals were terrific; whilst they uttered them with such stentorian strength of lungs, and with such a hearty zest, that one would have thought they were enjoying the greatest luxury the world could bestow upon them, when they had fairly essayed to outpour the bitter streams of hate, with which their breasts seemed to be inundated. To the ringing of the bells succeeded the braying of trumpets and the beating of drums; fife filled the air with their shrill notes, and the loud and protracted huzzas of children, every now and then, rent the atmosphere, and penetrated the walls of the King's Head, until they pierced the ear of Francis and roused him from his slumbers. "Hilloa! what can all this mean?" he ejaculated as he sprang from his bed, "these rejoicings are surely the advent of the fortunate marriage of some loyal cavalier, for I am sure that no puritan would suffer such indications of the levity and thoughtlessness of the human heart, even on what ought to be the happiest day of his life. Let me get washed and dressed, and I shall soon know what it is all about. Heigho! I wish it was my wedding that these young varlets were celebrating!" and he half-sighed, when he heard another huzza, as he commenced the process of ablution.

This finished, and his gay habiliments rapidly, yet tastefully, donned and arranged, he sallied forth to the sitting-room, where he met the host of the inn, full of bustle and importance.

"Good morning, mine host of the King's Head," said Francis. "What is all this noise about?"

"Noise!" returned the host, "Music and merry-making, if you please. We shall have a busy few days in Kingsholme, I promise you, and the lads and lasses will be tripping it on the green this evening, as gaily as the best of them in the halls of my Lord Duke at Daccleton."

"From what cause, my host?"

"Why, bless your loving heart, the duke has passed

but an hour ago, and many of the court are with him whilst his majesty is not far behind him; all coming to pass a few days with his grace at Daccleton House," said the host.

"The duke, the court, his majesty.—Where's my cap? Out of my way, I must be off," said the page, as he ran about, looking for his cap, and at the same time calling for his boots.

"Aye!" continued the host, "I understand that Ben Jonson, the poet, and masque-maker, has been at Daccleton for some days, with painters, and actors, and musicians, preparing some great entertainment, which is to be represented before his majesty. There will be rare doings, I promise you."

"What, Ben Jonson!" exclaimed the page, "my own rough, but faithful friend, true as steel, and bold as brass! Where are my boots? I must be off."

"Nay, I know naught of his truth or his boldness, but I have heard that he is a renowned poet, and in very high favour with the king."

"Why, I have been with him many a time, and off at the Devil, where—"

"At the Devil?" ejaculated the host, "Heaven be merciful to us all!"

"Yes, at the Devil Tavern, by Temple Bar, in Fleet Street, London, and if he be here, then am I already safely restored to the favour of the king. Boots, I say, where are my boots?"

The boots were now brought, and whilst he was encasing his limbs in these ponderous receptacles, the host took occasion to remind him that he had not yet broken his fast, and that to face the air of Kingsholme without something substantial, in the way of fish or flesh in his stomach, was a sheer tempting of Providence, and would infallibly prove all the worse for himself.

"Breakfast!" exclaimed the page, "Talk not to me of breakfast this morning. The good news with which you have just regaled me is sufficient for me, and will continue to be so until I return from Daccleton House." So saying, he sallied forth from the hostelry, and entering the stable-yard, ordered out Chevalier, and was soon on the road to the residence of the Duke of Buckingham.

Having arrived at the summit of a hill which commanded a complete view of the country, he drew up Chevalier, and paused for a while, as if struck with admiration at the beauty of the scenery with which he was surrounded. Hill and dale, wood and water, in endless variety of disposition, filled the eye with delight, and where art had not exhausted her skill to beautify the landscape of which Daccleton House was the centre, nature seemed, in a prodigious hour, to have showered her choicest charms upon almost every spot in its immediate vicinity. Transported with the varied loveliness of the prospect, he for a short time forgot the business which had so urgently brought him to the top of the hill on his way to accomplish it, but now that this was recalled, he put spurs to his horse, and was in a few minutes under the shadow of the walls of Daccleton House.

Having given his horse to a groom, he made for the entrance to the house, and being piloted to the hall, which had been fitted up in the style of a theatre, he there found his friend Ben, busily engaged in the business of the entertainment which was forthwith to be represented before king Charles.

"Ah, ha, Master Francis! thou here?" exclaimed the poet, and taking the hand of the page within the grasp of his own, covered it with both hands, and pressed it warmly. "Now, what has brought thee all the way from London? Art thou restored to the favour of our good king?"

"No, indeed, I'm not," returned the page.

"Then what has brought thee here? for thou must know that even his grace the duke has taken offence at thee, and would require some propitiation of his favour before he finds thee at Daccleton," said the poet.

"Why, I have come to pay my respects to you, my honoured friend," said the page.

"Very good, and I am grateful; but there is danger in the act. Besides, it is very bold, not to speak of its imprudence, in thee, whilst standing in the cold and shadowy gloom of the royal love," returned the poet.

"Well, you know, neither poet nor page has ever been very remarkable for prudence; but as you stand high with the king, and as your new entertainment is sure to give great pleasure on this occasion of his majesty's visit to Daccleton, I bethought myself that a word from you would very readily restore me to my place at court, if you would vouchsafe to speak it," said the page.

"Alas! Master Francis, I fear that I do not stand so high in royal estimation as the warmth of thy imagination would incline thee to believe. But what is the word that I am to speak?"

"Why, I am of opinion," said the page, "that when his majesty has witnessed your new masque, that he, as well as all others will be delighted with it, and

that he will deny you nothing, within reasonable bounds, that you may ask."

"Well, and what am I to ask?"

"My forgiveness, and restoration to favour!"

The countenance of the poet, independent of the many asperities with which its features were marked, became perfectly radiant, and, looking with an eye of extreme benevolence upon the page, whom he sincerely loved, said that he would certainly do that much, if the king was pleased with his entertainment, and gave him the opportunity.

"Then I am certain that I shall, once more, bask in the sunshine of royalty," observed Francis.

"Nay, thou must not be too sure," returned the poet, "for I am afraid you overrate my influence. Meanwhile, however, you must be gone, and not be found here by any of the duke's retainers, who know thee, and who may mar our plot before it is begun to be put in practice."

"Fare-thee-well, then, for the present, and may the laurel crown once more encircle thy brow before we meet again!" said the page, and hastily withdrew.

Charles and his retinue had arrived at the scene where, for some days, a succession of festivities were to take place, and where Pleasure was to occupy the seat of Care, and to preside over the rosy hours that were in store for the enjoyment of the monarch. The day came, on which the representation of the new entertainment by Ben Jonson was to be honoured with the presence of a king and a queen, and great was the delight which it gave to all who beheld it. The poet stood behind the chair of his sovereign, and not only was an auditor of his flattering encomiums, but a witness of the extreme gratification which was testified in the countenances of every one that was present. When the divided curtain closed, and showed that the masque had been played out, the king involuntarily exclaimed, "O Rare Ben Jonson!" which was immediately taken up by the rest of the audience, who turned their eyes upon the poet, and rewarded him with their most grateful and bewitching smiles. Queen Henrietta, daughter of Henry IV., of France, beckoned him to her side, when, with the most captivating grace, she took from her own head a coronet of flowers, and placed it upon that of the kneeling poet. The act, the situation—the admiration on the one side, and the gratitude on the other which produced them; and the principal figures—a queen and a poet, in the midst of such an assembly—would have formed a beautiful subject for the pencil of an artist who had talent sufficient to reproduce it on the canvas with something like the spirit of its reality. The heart of the poet beat high when he felt this royal guerdon laid upon his head by the hands of the queen, and still higher did it beat when he heard her endeavour to repeat the words of her sovereign lord with the same accent—"O Rare Ben Jonson!"

Albeit, although by no means given to "the melting mood," the rough old poet could scarcely withhold the tear which glistened in his eye from rolling over his rivelled cheek, whilst, with a voice tremulous with emotion, he replied:

"Let my epitaph be the words of your gracious Majesty; and wherever I may lie, let RARE BEN JONSON be engraven on the stone that marks the spot!"

"May that hour be far distant!" interposed the king. "But how am I to reward a poet who has not only now, but on other occasions, given me so much reason to admire and be grateful? Speak, Rare Ben Jonson, and name your own reward!"

"Since it is by your own Majesty that I am thus commanded," said the poet, with humility, "I would beg for the return of your royal favour to Francis Merri-mind, the discarded page, whose youth has led him into error, for which he now grieves most heartily."

A cloud passed over the brow of the king, who suddenly rose from his seat, and, desiring the poet to follow him, withdrew into a private cabinet close by, amidst the silence and amazement of the whole assembly. When here, the door was closed behind them, and taking his seat on a high-backed cushioned chair, he thus addressed the poet:

"Pray what do you know of the youth whose pardon you have just requested?"

"He is one with whom I have had much acquaintance, and who is possessed of a rare wit, for which I admire him; a good disposition, for which I love him; and a true heart, for which I would plead for him," said the poet, with great confidence.

"Is he a poet?" curiously asked the king.

"Oh no, your Majesty; at least, I have not heard that he belongs to that ancient guild, but, I believe that, were he disposed and practised a little, he might turn a love-ditty very well," returned the poet.

"Ah!" murmured the king, and paused for some time before he thus resumed, "Do you think that this said friend of yours entertains any treacherous dispositions towards our person and our throne?"

"Treacherous dispositions!" repeated the poet. "No, no more than I do. Your Majesty has not within the saline boundaries of these kingdoms a more honourable, a more loyal, or a more faithful subject and servant."

"Indeed! How strange is it, then, that he should be found in the company of the most violent of the partisans, with whom he holds long conversations, and the treason of whose disordered minds he listens to without the slightest attempt to resent it?" said the king.

"Pardon me, your Majesty, but you have been misinformed; I know the circumstances to which you allude," said the poet.

"Well, what are they?"

"They are simply these. He is acquainted with one Enoch Redford, who, as your Majesty is doubtless aware, is a violent, unbending fanatic, but who, nevertheless, has a very gentle and very beautiful daughter, to whom Master Francis has been paying his addresses."

"So far, so good, Master Jonson," said the king, somewhat relaxing the severity of the tone in which, up to this point, he had continued to address the poet; "but if he is in love with the daughter of such a man, he must necessarily frequently be brought into his company, where he can hardly escape the taint of his principles."

"It might be so with some, so please your Majesty; but Master Francis has a mind of his own, is thoroughly imbued with loyal principles, and would defend them against all comers, at the point of the sword, or I am not what your Majesty has named me, Rare Ben Jonson!"

"Nay, say not so; but use thine eyes, and peruse this paper."

The king, on speaking these words, put into the hands of the poet a document, which was eagerly read in silence, but the contents of which did not cause the slightest alteration in the features of Ben, who read it calmly to its close, and then, with the most perfect collectedness, returned it to the sovereign.

"Well, are you convinced?" asked the king.

"That Master Francis is no traitor, I am."

"That he is, you mean," returned the monarch, with a frown.

"Whoever wrote this paper, and has procured its introduction to the hands of your Majesty, is, himself, either a traitor or a spy, and in watching and disclosing the proceedings of the fanatics, who are certainly, I think, very unreasonably hostile and dangerous to the government, has managed to implicate Francis on account of his visits to the house of Enoch Redford, to see his daughter; but I am as persuaded of his innocence, as I am conscious that I am now addressing your Majesty in his behalf."

"Well, on your account we will not hastily condemn the youth; but consider the subject further; meanwhile let us return to the assembly, from which we have been too long absent," returned the king, leaving the cabinet with a brighter brow than he had entered it, followed by his favourite poet.

The ever varying and butterfly sort of life which the page had led at court, made the days which he was doomed to stay at Kingsholme extremely wearisome, and as he was forbidden the house of Enoch Redford, and dared not show himself in the precincts of Daceton, he scarcely knew what to do with the time which hung so heavily on his hands. The King's Head, too, was not very abundantly supplied with books, to which he might have turned, as these are always a happy refuge to a mind disposed to study or gather information. Shakespeare was, as yet, in the hands of few country people, and Paradise Lost was not yet written. There was a pile of sermons and tracts, however, on the shelf of one of the ample presses, with which the apartment he occupied was accommodated, and some of these he read, but with little edification. He was afraid to go much abroad lest he might be seen by some of the duke's retainers who might know him, and who, whilst he was under the cloud of displeasure, might report something unfavourable of him. Consequently he lived, in so far as shunning social intercourse was concerned, as like a hermit as he could; although he by no means enjoyed that heavenly kind of mental tranquillity which it is usually supposed is the especial possession of the inhabitant of a moss-covered cell.

Seeing that it would have been impossible for the page himself to describe how the five days preceding his appointment to meet Enoch Redford passed away, it will not be expected that we have the power of doing it; but that they did glide away is certain, when on the evening of the stated time he might be seen wending on foot towards the forest in the immediate neighbourhood of which stood the dwelling of Enoch. Let it not be supposed that this individual, though a violent fanatic, was a poor man, or of a very defective education. In this last particular he was quite equal to the best of his neighbours, whilst in the other, he was generally much their superior. He had

both wide lands and large tenements of his own, and was in a position to give with the hand of his daughter a dowry sufficiently tempting without herself, to such as held a higher position than that of a page at court. It was not for this, however, that Francis sought her. He cared neither for lands nor tenements. He loved Amy for herself alone, and bad her father been, by the malignity of fate, suddenly deprived of all he was worth in the world, he felt that, if possible, Amy would still be dearer to him; that his heart would cling still closer to her, and that his greatest delight would be to prove to her that his passion was disinterested towards all things saving herself, his honour, and his duty to the king.

These were the noble meditations with which his whole soul was engrossed when he had arrived at a thick part of the forest, through which he could take a night cut to the house of Enoch. As the evening was calm and beautiful, he gave himself up to the uncontrolled enjoyment of his thoughts, after he had entered among the thick-growing shadowy trees, on his way so the house of Amy. He had not proceeded far, however, when he was pounced upon by several armed men, who wore masks, and who, with their swords in hand, seized him, and before he could lay his hand upon the hilt of his own weapon, or even utter a single word, a large cloak was thrown over his head and face, and completely enveloped him in darkness. He was then lifted into a saddle on horseback, and, with his hands bound behind him, led away he knew not whither. Long was the road, however, and as perfect silence was preserved by those who had made him captive, he could not form the slightest idea as to where he was being taken, or what was the nature of the crime of which he had been guilty. After a couple of hours of suspense and hard riding, a halt was called, when he was assisted to dismount, and hurriedly dragged up a stair, at the top of which he felt himself ushered into some vast apartment, in which he conceived that there was a large number of people, from a low, half-suppressed murmur which his presence seemed to cause, and which momentarily died away. Amidst the complete silence which now reigned, a voice, which seemed rather to have assumed a character of roughness, than to have it by nature, asked Francis whether he felt anything touching his breast?

"Yes," said the page, "I feel either the point of a pike or a sword; but for what reason I know not."

"Never heed the reason," returned the same voice; "you shall know that in good time. Meanwhile, know that you are encompassed with the keenest-edged, and sharpest-pointed weapons that ever filled the scabbards of determined men, and if you move but an inch from the spot on which you now stand, your blood shall atone for the act. Have you any idea of the place in which you are?"

"None; I have been brought here blindfolded, hand-bound, and on horseback, and, although not quite a stranger in that part of the country whence I have been so rudely taken, yet I am as completely in the dark as to where I am here, as if I were buried a hundred fathoms in the earth."

"Know ye in whose presence you are?"

"No."

"Then, be it my duty to inform you. Know, then, that you have been brought among those who have resolved to free their country from the oppression of a tyrant, and to set up a new government in the place of that of Charles Stuart."

"If such be your resolution, and if I am brought here to make one of you, that will never be," said the page, with firmness.

"Think again before you speak, Master Merrimind, for we are no strangers to your name. Remember that the sword's point now all but touches the most vital part of your breast."

"I care not! Sooner will I perish a thousand times, had I so many lives to lose, than league myself with traitors to my king," replied the page.

"Bethink yourself again, we say. With us you insure yourself of the maiden you love, riches, and position; whilst, if you still hold up for the king, certain and immediate death will be your doom."

"Be it so," said Francis.

"What! Will you still adhere to the rule of a tyrant—of one who would crush the weak of his country beneath a rod of iron—who would sacrifice not only its liberty, but its religion—who, in short, has no sympathy with his subjects, and whose heart is as cold as his soul is insincere?"

"I will still adhere to the rule of my king," returned the page, with indelible spirit.

"Your plighted troth to Miss Amy Redford, then, goes for nothing?"

"Yes," said the page, and his voice faltered while he spoke, "yes; for her, if for anyone, I would sacrifice everything—wealth, position, fame, glory; but what I conceive to be my duty to my country and my king, I cannot sacrifice, for to him I am bound by every tie of gratitude and love."

"Oh, Francis!" involuntarily ejaculated a sweet female voice, tremulous with emotion.

"He caught the sound, and, although he was conscious it was Amy's, he, nevertheless, preserved his firmness, but had the cloak been removed from his face, a slight change of colour would have been perceptible."

For several minutes a pause took place, during which it appeared to Francis that his conceived enemies were holding counsel as to the further means they should employ, either to induce him to join them, or to execute extreme vengeance upon him with such secrecy as to insure safety to themselves. At length he heard a different voice say:

"We will give him one more chance for his life!"

A deep silence immediately pervaded the apartment; not a whisper was heard, no sound whatever; not even of the breathing of the many beings who were certainly present. Amidst this ominous stillness, however, the heart of the page continued firm to its purpose. For one moment it was shaken by the image of his beloved Amy, which rose in all the fulness of her sweetness, innocence and beauty before his blindfolded eyes; but it soon passed away, and left him as resolute as before. He now heard a heavy footstep approaching; a slight motion agitates the assembly, and he nerves himself to meet what he believes to be the last chance he has of preserving his life.

"Once more, Master Francis Merrimind, if you will make one of us, unite in shouting 'Down with the tyrant, Charles Stuart!'"

"Never! God save the king!" cried the page, when the cord which fastened the cloak over him, and the bonds which bound his hands behind him, were immediately cut, and he stood in Daceton House, amidst a splendid throng of the lords and ladies of the court of his king. Immediately before him was the sovereign to whom he had just given such a striking proof of his loyalty, holding Amy by the right hand, whilst behind him was his friend the poet, whose countenance was almost radiant with rapture at having beheld how nobly Francis had proved the truth of his sentiments in passing through such a terrible ordeal. The page sank upon his knees.

"Rise," said his sovereign with a smile. "I have proved thy loyalty, and it shall now be rewarded. First, here is Miss Amy Redford! take her from my hand and make her your own before the hymeneal altar. The violence of her father is forgiven, on account of your faithfulness and her affection; and it may be that through thy influence, he may, for the future, incline to judge less harshly of our government. With the maiden take this paper, which you can peruse at your leisure, as a suitable evidence of our having forgotten the past, and of thy return to our favour." At the same time Charles presented Amy to him, with the document, which was a conveyance of a rich portion of crown lands, to Francis Merrimind.

The page was lost in wonder. The whole scene was to him perfectly bewildering, and he was about to stammer forth his grateful acknowledgements, when he was interrupted by the king, who bade him, "thank the poet, Rare Ben Jonson, rather than himself, for any favour he may have received."

Soon afterwards, Francis and Amy were married, even with the sanction of Enoch Redford; but, as the political storm rose higher and higher, the husband of Amy and her father became gradually more and more estranged from each other. Soon afterwards the Duke of Buckingham fell by the hand of Felton, the assassin, and the country became divided into the opposing parties distinguished by the names of Cavaliers and Roundheads. Francis adhered to the former, and fought for his king; whilst Enoch stood high amongst the latter, and fought against him. After Charles had forfeited both his crown and his head, the continued successes of Cromwell led him to the Protectorate. Francis Merrimind, with others, had been marked out by the Commonwealth to suffer for the unwavering adherence he had given to the Crown; but he was saved by the intercession of his father-in-law, and permitted to retire to his estates, which he was enabled to retain. He never more took a part in public affairs, but lived quietly and happily throughout the remainder of his days.

JOHN SHERRELL.

REMARKABLE ESCAPE FROM SHIPWRECK.—The barque Gratitude, of Sunderland, Captain George Carr, of 361 tons burden, was running before the wind (a strong south-wester) on her return to Sunderland from Bordeaux, in ballast. At 2.30 a.m. the wind suddenly veered round to the N.W. and blew a hurricane. The ship was then, by the captain's reckoning, at about 39 miles S.E. off the Saints—so the English generally term the "Ile de Sein," and its far outstretching reef of sunken rocks. The only means of preventing the vessel from being driven towards the rocks was to wear ship, for which purpose all hands were called on deck, and soon came up half-dressed.

All the ship's standing sails were blown to rags; the foremast and staysail were set, but the ship would not answer her helm, even after the mizenmast was cut away. By this time it was five o'clock, and the light on the island was seen at about two miles' distance. There being no possibility of saving the ship, the long-boat was cleared away and lowered. At daybreak the ship struck and filled. All hands got into the boat, and were barely clear of the ship when she fell over on her starboard side and began to break up. Although neither clothes, ship's papers, nor instruments could be saved, Captain Carr had contrived to get hold of a small jar of oil, and to put into the boat. By throwing out a little oil from time to time, the water was rendered smooth enough for the boat's head to be kept to the waves; so that with good management, assisted by a well-disciplined crew, the boat was backed by degrees to the island, where, after the loss of all their arms but one, the crew were landed in safety, cold and half-naked. The captain's Bible was the first article washed ashore. It had already been twice saved with him from shipwreck.

SELF-MADE;

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

By MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "The Hidden Hand," "The Lost Heiress," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

LISTENING.

Oh, poverty! what crimes thou dost beget
In human nature, when the lust of gold
Has taken possession of the sordid soul.

Old Play.

STRUNG by suspicions and fears she was utterly unable to repress, Claudia indignantly left the drawing-room.

She would see Lord Vincent and demand some explanation of this woman's presence.

From the first Claudia had been afflicted with an irrepressible feeling of disgust at her husband's strange acquaintance, and now the feeling was doubly strengthened.

What position did the woman hold, in relation to Lord Vincent?

Claudia sighed heavily as she asked herself this question, but her high spirit and her strong will subdued the softer feelings of her nature, and confirmed her in a settled purpose to know the worst.

When she left the drawing-room she sought her own apartment.

But on her way she was somewhat puzzled, for the place was new to her, and among the many doors she scarcely knew which was her own.

"This," she said, "I think is it;" and she gently opened a door leading to a suite of apartments as much like hers as they could be.

She entered. There was no light save from a lamp in the further room.

How came that lamp there?

She could not recollect seeing it before; and as she noiselessly stepped across the ante-room she suddenly discovered her mistake.

They were not her apartments.

They were so marvellously like her's, however, that she involuntarily delayed her retreat, looking curiously about her, and oppressed by a mysterious feeling strangely connected with that distant chamber in which the lamp was burning.

What was it that fixed her eyes steadily upon that lamp, and impelled her to listen for a sound she seemed to expect?

She could not tell; but there she stood, rooted to the spot, and leaning anxiously forward.

There was a something in the air that seemed to speak of treachery.

Ah! What was that?

She now listened with an intense earnestness that her former curiosity was all but indifference to.

A voice, in agonized and passionate entreaty, was pouring out a flood of reproaches.

It was the voice of Faustina!

That in itself would have been nothing.

But whose was the other voice?

There was no doubt—it was the voice of Lord Vincent!

Claudia crept close to the wall, to support herself, and the explanation she had intended to seek of her husband, was vouchsafed to her.

"Malcolm!" exclaimed Faustina, "have I deserved this? I lived upon your love, and gloried in it, and now, in this very house, and to my very presence, you have brought another! Cruel, cruel!"

"Faustina," replied Lord Vincent, soothingly, "don't be so impulsive. Wait, and hear the story I have to tell you!"

"The story? What story can requite me for this—

this—poignant that you have driven deep into my heart! You know, Malcolm, how an Italian can love, and you do this."

"Cara mia!" said Lord Vincent, in his tenderest tones, "listen to me!"

"And what for?" cried Faustina, almost shrieking with passion. "To hear that you were bound—you were compelled to do this. To know how and why it was, and to be satisfied with reasons! I am a lost, betrayed, wretched woman!"

And she burst into a flood of tears.

"My love, my darling, my only love, be calm, and listen!" said Lord Vincent.

There was a lull. The young wife shuddered in her hiding-place, for she could too well realize the scene in that room.

Presently, Lord Vincent spoke again.

"Faustina," he said, "I do not love her!"

"Indeed!" cried Faustina. "Then Heaven be praised for that! If you had —!"

"Come, love, be calm! You only possess my affection. On my knees, I swear it!"

"Not for the first time. You have deceived me ere this."

"In what?"

"In everything."

"Oh, Faustina, you are unjust. You are giving way to passion."

"Did you not swear, on your knees as you now are, to make me your wife? to give me the title of Lady Vincent?"

"And, I swear it again! That title you shall yet have!"

"How? What do you mean?"

"I mean that you shall shortly be Lady Vincent!"

"Malcolm!" Faustina exclaimed, "you are fooling me. You cannot, you know you cannot, do what you say!"

"I can, and will."

"I thought," replied Faustina, with an air of contempt, "that in this country no man, not even a viscount, can have two wives at once, at least legally."

How can there be two Lady Vincents?

"There need not be two. There shall be one, and that one, you!"

"You bewilder me, Malcolm. Pray be plainer."

A sudden and fierce light came into Faustina's eyes as she spoke, and she clutched Lord Vincent eagerly by the hand.

"Speak!" she said.

The unhappy, deceived wife listened for the revelation, with as great eagerness as her rival. A cold perspiration came upon her forehead, and she pressed her hand to her heart in mute agony.

"Speak!" repeated Faustina.

"Must I tell you what you had better be ignorant of?" said Lord Vincent.

"I must know all, Malcolm. If I share your love, I will share your dangers. My heart, tender to you, is steel to the world. I can hear the worst."

And the wicked, cruel eyes of the Italian seemed to look eagerly for evil.

"My love, you are mistaken!" said Lord Vincent.

"I have nothing to tell you of that kind!"

He had detected at once the meaning of Faustina's eager look.

She drew back rebuked, but not abashed.

"I do not intend, Faustina, to make a criminal of myself, nor of you. The path is smooth enough without that."

"Peste!" exclaimed Faustina; "you are an enigma. You say you do not love her, and you love me! She is your wife, and yet I am to be your wife! In mercy's name, what do you mean?"

Faustina was growing passionate again.

"I mean simply, that, by a very plain and legal course of proceeding, you, my love, will become the Viscountess Vincent."

"Ah! you are indeed a sorcerer!"

"No. The thing is very simple."

"How?"

"I tell you, I had better not explain my plans."

Enough, that they will be successful, and that you and I will enjoy the fruits of the marriage which so distresses you."

"Malcolm, you are—you must be playing with me. Why, if all this is to happen, did you bring her here?"

"The better to carry out my intended scheme. Here she is secluded from the world—shut up, as it were, in a stony box, of which I have the key. Besides, here have I not you?"

"And you did not," said Faustina, "you did not love her?"

"No, on my word, no!"

"Not for a moment, not for an hour, not for a day?"

"Not for the fraction of an hour, my sweet!"

"Malcolm, my brain seems all on fire! I dare not, cannot, distrust you, and yet—"

"You will not distrust me, even in your idlest moment, when I tell you all. You know, Faustina, I was poor—poor for an aristocrat?"

"Well?"

"I married her because I was poor, and because of that only."

Claudia, still leaning against the wall, with her ear bent eagerly towards the speakers, heard all this.

Poor, miserable, deceived wife!

"I was so poor, you see, and she was so rich."

"Two ugly facts!" said Faustina, grimly smiling.

"And my father was so implacable. He had somehow heard of you."

"I believe so."

"And he thought you were not likely to improve my position in a pecuniary sense; nor, indeed, in any other sense. You see?"

Faustina nodded her head impatiently.

"The result of this was that I was left—in the language of my noble father—to live upon love!"

"And could you not?" asked the Italian, in an impassioned tone. "Not upon my love, Malcolm? Ah, ah! men—Englishmen—are but poor lovers!"

"Not poor lovers, Faustina, but very inefficient paupers. What should I do with you without money?"

"Ah, well—go on!"

"I saw plainly enough a way to be rich, and independent of my father. In other words, I saw Claudia Merlin."

"And she bewitched you?"

"Harping on the same string, Faustina? I thought we had settled that point!"

"Let it pass—I care not to talk of it. You married her?"

"Stay! you are too hasty. We shall come to that soon enough."

"Quite!"

"From the first moment I was introduced to her, knowing her value in a monetary sense, I determined to sacrifice myself and secure her fortune. It was absolutely necessary to me, if you and I were to be together!"

"A strange necessity!"

"Very. She was a little Bank of England in herself—a young Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, I may say. Her wealth was illimitable, and, what was the best of all, easily to be handled and transferred from her keeping to mine."

"Good!"

"Good, indeed, as you will see. She was the chief receptacle of all the family property. Everybody belonging to her, except her father, seemed to die solely for the purpose of making her a splendid match!"

"How good of them!"

"Excellent people!" said Lord Vincent, growing even cheerful by contemplating his wretched wife's possessions.

"And will all this wealth—all this money—come to you?" asked Faustina.

"All! I was wary enough to take care of that. Of course it was not done without difficulty. There were a hundred obstacles raised by her friends, but one thing overcame them."

"And that?"

"Was the will of Claudia Merlin herself!"

"She had a will, then?"

"A strong one. And I, you see, Faustina—I had a title! This made her will a thousand times stronger. Her father was a perfect child in her hands; he had always been so, and when settlements were talked of, and I remonstrated, Claudia came in, and gave herself over to me without a stipulation, and with all her wealth!"

Poor Claudia! she heard this, and bitterly indeed did she repent that the boast was only too true!

"Then all she possessed is now yours?" asked Faustina.

"All! I have laid my hands upon it to the last farthing."

Claudia shuddered.

"I really may be very dull," said Faustina, "but I am puzzled to understand how all this is to make me Lady Vincent. You placed the ring upon the finger of this female money-bag, I suppose, and married her properly after the English fashion?"

"I placed the ring upon her finger."

"You did?"

"Yes."

"The ring that I was to wear! The ring you swore to me you would place upon no woman's finger but mine!"

"Faustina, my love, you must absolve me of that oath. I did place the ring upon Claudia's finger, but—"

"But what?"

"Have you seen the finger on which that ring should be?"

"No. I have not looked for it."

"Then, the next time you see Claudia, look especially at that finger."

"I should tear the ring from off it."

"You would not."

"Diablo! but I would."

"You could not."

"Why?"

"Because the ring is not there."

"How?"

"It slipped off."

"But she put it on again?"

"No."

"And does not wear it?"

"No."

"A singular circumstance, indeed. Where is the ring, then?"

"In my keeping."

"And she is not aware that you have it?"

"She is not. When it slipped off—for I purposely obtained a large one—I kept my eye upon it; and somehow I managed to secrete it. Here it is."

"Give it to me."

"One moment."

Claudia's heart beat as the conversation halted. It was the ring she had been married with that Lord Vincent was searching for, to give to her rival! The agony of this revelation only intensified her determination to stay and hear all.

"Ah, here it is!" said Lord Vincent, bringing the ring from the recesses of his purse. "Take it, Faustina: we are married, you see, and with a true wedding-ring, after all!"

Faustina took the ring and placed it upon her finger.

"It fits me," she said, carelessly.

"The best proof in the world that it belongs to you."

She dallied with the ring on her finger, and kept turning it round and round, as though in thought.

"If this were really mine!" she said.

"Faustina, my darling—it is yours. Come, I place it upon your finger."

Lord Vincent rose as he said this. He took the ring from the finger Faustina had put it upon, and mumbled a few words of the marriage service.

It was a pure farce; but the Italian took it as a ceremony, and, as Lord Vincent replaced the ring upon her finger, she cast her arms about his neck, and looking earnestly into his face, said:

"You really mean, then, Malcolm, that I shall be Lady Vincent?"

"I do."

"Then tell me your plans."

"Not yet."

Faustina took the ring from her finger, and held it towards him.

"You have deceived me before," she said. "I cannot trust you again."

"Are you mad, Faustina? Really, this is too much. I have done all a man can to prove I am in earnest with you, and still you disbelieve."

"You are going now—to her!"

"That is a necessity of my position."

"Your position! Bah! I cannot bear that you should go to her."

"My love—my life—it is only for a short time—a short time."

"And when I meet her?"

"You must be discreet. You know that we are related."

Faustina smiled a sickly smile,

"You must maintain your position as the Honourable Mrs. Kenneth Dugald, widow of my half-brother."

"And this ring?"

"Keep it on your finger. It will do excellently for a widow."

"She will know it?"

"Never fear. There are more wedding-rings than one in the world, and they are mostly alike."

Faustina slowly replaced the ring upon her finger. She turned to Lord Vincent as she did this and said:

"Malcolm, I will do as you wish me. But you are going to her—to her!"

"I must. But one kiss first. One kiss, Faustina."

She turned her lips towards him, and the seal of love and perjury was complete.

"My love—my life," he said. "Good night—good night."

Claudia left her hiding-place and hurried off, heart-broken, to her own apartments.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

SUSPICIONS.

But wherefore is it now
That dark suspicion doth possess our minds?

ANON.

ENLIGHTENED by the error she had made, in mistaking for her own, the door that led to the retreat of her rival, Claudia speedily found the apartments she

sought, and, when she reached them, went at once to her boudoir, and, overwhelmed by an agony of thought, fell into a chair.

She felt, too truly, she had married a title.

And what else?

She sat some time musing, and looking vacantly into the fire, wondering at the fearful perfidy of her husband, and feeling how true was the instinct which had made her regard Faustina with such well-merited disgust.

"Betrayed—robbed," she said, talking in a low tone to herself; "and what is to come?"

She paused, and looked again into the wasting embers, the tears, that she had hitherto restrained, coursing freely down her cheeks, and making her gaze through a liquid iris at the dying embers.

She was interrupted.

"My dear lady," said a kind, sympathising voice, "what ails ye?"

It was old Katy, who had slipped in unperceived, and who was now regarding her mistress with unfeigned looks of distress.

"Nothing, Katy—nothing," said Claudia, trying to hide her tears by a subterfuge.

"And I tell ye, my darling, it is something; and, though I'm not bound to be inquisitive like, I can't see my own dear young lady cast down without asking the bent of it, though I'm not a curious body—no, by no means."

Claudia looked up, and smiled faintly through her tears at the faithful Katy.

"And you think I am distressed, Katy," she said.

"Think, my nice darlin'—I know you are. I can see it by the tears that you're trying to hide, and the look of your sad, mournful face."

"Indeed, Katy, do I look mournful?"

"Aye, indeed, you do, my pretty one. You're sore troubled about some evil doin'; and, to speak plainly, so I am—I, my own darlin'."

"You, Katy?"

"Yes—I'm sore troubled myself!"

"About what?"

"About this place, and all that's in it—yourself as well, my pretty one."

"I!"

"Yes. You've had an ill-time of it, since you came to this drearish place, and your own sweet eyes have lost half their brightness."

"Have they, Katy?"

"Aye, and indeed they have; and there's nothing to wonder at for the reason."

"What is for the reason, Katy?"

"I shall be too bold, I'm fearin' if I say my darlin'."

"That depends, Katy, upon what you have to say."

What is it that troubles you?"

"What is it, my lady, that troubles you?"

Katy looked at Claudia searchingly, and with a quaint freedom that her faithfulness only could warrant.

Claudia cowered even beneath the gaze of her servant.

"I am a little troubled, Katy," she said; "but what is it that disturbs your ordinary good-nature?"

"I'm a plain-speaking woman," said Katy, "and maybe I take more liberties nor I ought; but I can't abide that outlandish creature that's here."

"What creature?"

"The creature they call Mrs. Dugald."

"Mrs. Dugald, Katy! and what of her. Who is Mrs. Dugald?"

"The Italian woman that my lord's always a talking in private to."

"In private, Katy! Have you seen Lord Vincent and the woman you call Mrs. Dugald talking in private?"

"Aye, that I have, my lady; and I've seen more than I care to talk of."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, my lady. I've seen that I'd like to be far from sein' if I was—which the Lord in his mercy forbid—Lord Vincent's wife."

"Katy!" exclaimed Claudia, reprovingly.

"I may be forgettin' myself," replied the old servant, putting her apron to her eyes; "but I can't help it, my lady. I look upon ye as my own child, always mindin' the difference of station and that!"

Claudia was softened.

"What have you seen, Katy," she asked.

"It's a sore sight to tell ye of, my lady, but if you're not to know it, who is? I'd have that woman burnt for a witch."

"That stranger woman?"

"Yes, my lady—that Mrs. Dugald. She's no honest woman."

"Hush, Katy!"

"I can't hush, my lady. I'd put the likes of her under the town pump."

"And what is all this about?" asked Claudia, suppressing her own feelings.

"It's neither more nor less than she's a bad, wicked woman," said Katy, bursting out. "She's not

honest, or she wouldn't cast her eyes at his lordship as though she was his wife. I see her, with her wicked looks, as she met him in the hall there, and I could not keep from watchin' 'em as they went into the rooms across yonder."

And Katy pointed in the direction of the suite of apartments where Claudia had just been listening.

"And you saw Lord Vincent and Mrs. Dugald, as you call her, go in there, did you?" Claudia asked, with apparent unconcern.

"Aye, my lady, indeed I did! and what's more, I couldn't help hearin' a word or so they said, for they thought that ne'er a one was listenin' to their wickedness."

"Katy!"

"I can't help what I'm sayin', my lady. I'm a sinfu' woman, but I'm not shameless; and I never could abear a creature like that Mrs. Dugald."

"But you may be mistaken, Katy," said Claudia, with some pride. "Lord Vincent would surely not act in the way you imagine."

"Imagine, my lady! I say, beware of that strange woman! She's not fit to be in the same house with ye. She's a snake in the grass—a serpent at your own hearthstone; and she'll sting you, my pretty one, she'll sting ye, as sure as I'm an honest woman!"

Katy had so worked herself up to a pitch of passion, that Claudia became alarmed, and, with a few words of kindness, dismissed her.

When Claudia was left alone, the full force of her fearful position was vividly apparent to her. What was she to do?

She first thought of making a sudden retreat from the home that so inhospitably sheltered her, and settling with her husband from the vantage-ground of her father's house.

But this would be equivalent to surrendering her position at once, and giving up to Faustina, without a struggle, all that the wily Italian cared to secure.

It was a critical position. What was to be done?

Her naturally high spirit now came to succour her in her distress. She would, with the help of Providence, fight the battle out against the fearful odds that surrounded her.

In place of her love for Lord Vincent came a stern, calm feeling of determination to foil him in his base intrigue; and as she leant back in her chair, and reviewed the events of the past hour, her resolution was strengthened.

She was but a woman, however, and, after determining thus, she felt half-inclined to give way and make her escape, a miserable, deceived wife, from the hideous toils that had been woven about her.

She wavered a good deal, but presently rose from her chair, and called Katy.

"My writing materials," she said.

Katy looked at her wonderingly, and laid the desk and paper before her.

"It's a letter you're going to write, my lady?"

"Yes, Katy."

"To him?"

"To whom, Katy?"

"Lord Vincent?"

"No, Katy."

"Shall I wait up for you, my lady?"

"What for?"

"Oh, my darlin'," cried Katy, flinging herself at her mistress's feet; "are ye goin' to leave the house? Are ye goin' from this den o' wickedness? I'll follow ye, my lady! But don't go, don't go alone."

Claudia raised the faithful servant from her appealing position, and said kindly:

"No, Katy, I am not going. When I go you shall go with me. I shall not go yet—not yet. But I must be alone now. I shall want you in a few minutes."

Katy departed sorrowfully.

Claudia sat down and wrote. She sealed the letter, and addressed it. Then she rang again for her faithful servant.

"Katy," she said, "see that this letter goes off at once. I trust to you. It is most important. You will find a means to get it to the post-office."

"Indeed, my lady, I will," replied Katy, when she had looked at the address.

And she hurried off with the letter.

She had hardly turned her back, when Lord Vincent entered the room. He was scarcely in a good-humour, and he looked at his wife's sorrowful countenance with some displeasure.

He sat down, however, and uttered some complimentary nonsense more satirically than otherwise, and then suddenly said:

"You seem dull."

"Do I?" replied Claudia, struggling to hide her emotion.

"Yes, at least you look so."

"Well, I am dull."

"And why?"

"You have been absent so long!" replied Claudia, dissembling.

"Is that all? Oh, I've been busy."
 "Busy?"
 "Yes."
 "May I ask what business?"
 "It's too late now to tell you. I fancy you scarcely like Mrs. Dugald?"
 "Is it not too late to talk upon that subject?"
 "Well, perhaps it is. But you are anxious—at least, so you appeared to-day—about her?"
 "I am not at all anxious about Mrs. Dugald," replied Claudia, still dissembling.
 "Oh, you are not? I thought you were."
 "No, not at all."
 "Then you quite consent to her remaining here? I fancied you had some objection to it."
 "My objections, my lord," said Claudia, proudly, "I shall in future keep to myself. You say Mrs. Dugald is your sister-in-law—at least, so I have heard—and I have no desire to pry into the peculiar relations of your family."

Lord Vincent was puzzled. He had come to make a full, but false, discovery, and it was not wanted. What did Claudia mean?

A man, with a lie in his mouth, don't like to have it thrust back down his throat, and Lord Vincent had several lies on his tongue that he wanted to get rid of. He was determined to disembarass himself of them, for lies put on the shelf are apt to turn into wholesome truths, and disagree with their original manufacturers.

"What do you mean, Claudia?" he said, "about the relations of my family?"
 "Only, my lord, that they seem somewhat peculiar, and, being so, I must leave you to deal with them."

"Claudia, you are jealous of Mrs. Dugald." The injured wife now rose from her seat.
 "Jealous, Malcolm!" she said, unwittingly using the Christian name of her husband, after it had been profaned, as she thought, by Faustina; "you read my thoughts. But—" and she recovered herself then, "it is a very mild form of jealousy. Who is Mrs. Dugald?"

"The wife of my late half-brother, Kenneth."
 "Oh, indeed, and she is here under your protection?"

"Exactly so; she has no home but such as I can offer her, and you, Claudia, must receive her as I do."
 "As you do?"
 "Yes!"

"That I cannot do."
 "Why?"

"Because I am a woman. I have not the large hospitality of spirit that the other sex possesses."
 "I tell you, Claudia," said Lord Vincent angrily, "that whether you have that hospitality or not, Kenneth Dugald's widow must be a welcome guest in this house."

"You are warm in her cause?"
 "I am. I feel deeply for her position."

"No doubt," replied Claudia, half-betraying herself, "you are a most excellent man in such matters."

Lord Vincent was still puzzled. His suspicions were partly awakened to the cause of Claudia's strange demeanour, but knowing nothing of his wife's eaves-dropping, he enjoyed a fool's paradise of security, and felt that what she said, was prompted by a mere feminine dislike to the presence of a young and attractive woman in her husband's house.

"You do not," he said, "for a moment imagine that I have any other feeling for Mrs. Dugald than that of a brother?"

"I am not inclined, my lord," replied Claudia, "to discuss with you what feelings I may have upon the subject. I can only say that Mrs. Dugald's presence here is singular, and that I should find her here just now, is more singular still. Good night!"

Lord Vincent rose. He was about to take her hand, and imprint upon her lips a remnant of those kisses he had showered upon Faustina.

She shrank from him.

"My lord," she said, "my lips must be sacred for to-night. It is one of my sombre nights, and kissing would be out of place!"

And she walked quietly to her bedroom.
 Not to sleep! The canker-worm—the worm that dieth not—had entered her heart. She passed the night in dreamy, wakeful restlessness.

Her first thought in the morning was about the letter.

"It was posted safely, Katy?" she asked, when the faithful servant came to her bedside.

"Aye, my lady; by hook or by crook, Jim got it over. And it's now on its way home."

"Thank God for that!" said Claudia.

"You are not well, my lady dear," said Katy. "You look hot and feverish-like. May-be, you've passed a bad night?"

"Not a good one, Katy."

"And, sore to say, I've a message that won't make my poor darling better. But I suppose I must tell it!"

"What is it, Katy?"
 "Mrs. Dugald"—and here Katy paused, as though she was swallowing a strong dose of unpleasant medicine—"Mrs. Dugald wants to see ye."

"See me, Katy?"
 "Yes. She's comin' in to sit with you."

"This is strange!" thought Claudia. "Coming in to sit with me! What can she want?"

Katy divined her mistress's meaning.

"She's an ill body to sit with an honest woman. May-be, you'd rather sit alone?"

"Much rather, Katy."

"Shall I tell her so, my lady?"

"Well, no, not exactly that. But you may say that I am indisposed, and not fit for company."

"Very well, my lady. Small company she'd be for the likes of you, if she was to sit by ye! I'll take the message with all my heart."

And Katy went to Mrs. Dugald with the refusal.

(To be continued.)

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jesuit," "The Pretate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER LIII.

Of all the passions which conspire to blind
 Our erring judgment and mislead the mind;
 What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
 Is pride—that never-failing vice of fools

Pope.

THE instinct of the shark and the lawyer are said to be much the same: both display a wonderful pertinacity in following their prey. At an early hour the following morning, Quirk presented himself at the house of Lady Briancourt. Night, he doubted not, had brought reflection, and he fully expected to find her inclined to listen to the very cogent reasons which he came to offer.

"She must yield!" he thought. "It would be madness—ruin—to refuse a proposal on which her life depends!"

He had yet to learn the real character of the woman he had to contend with.

"Ah, Barnes!" he said, as the old steward ushered him into the drawing-room; "glad to see you!"

"And I am not glad to see you!" replied the old man.

"Humph! ha! yes! I can conceive that. Not pleasant to be found out!"

"But I am not found out yet!" said the faithful domestic. "True, ruin follows your steps; but I do not fear them. Your friendship is a snare!"

"Few men lose with a good grace!" retorted the lawyer, rubbing his hands with satisfaction.

"When I have lost I'll pay the forfeit!" was the reply.

"Forfeit!" repeated Quirk; "my dear fellow, do you know what the forfeit will be? Your life! The law, in its wisdom, regards the accomplice as bad as the perpetrator!"

"Perpetrator of what?"

The lawyer whispered a word in his ear; but instead of its producing the effect he expected, Mr. Barnes only replied to it by a disdainful smile.

"What is the purport of your visit here?" he demanded.

"To see Lady Briancourt."

"I will inform her ladyship of your arrival, and learn her pleasure whether she will see you or not."

"Pooh—pooh!" exclaimed Mr. Quirk; "she must see me—you know that times are changed! Lady Briancourt can no longer treat me with disdain; pride, in her position, is ridiculous!"

"Perhaps not so ridiculous a presumption in yours!" replied the house-steward. "You are a clever man, Mr. Quirk; but, like most clever men, have played too fine a game! Ned Cantor served you well, but not to the extent you think."

"Ned Cantor?"

"Ay! who else crept like a thief at midnight into my room, and stole my papers? Think you that I do not know the price he paid for his liberty, or who set him free from the hall? But I have not done either with him or you yet!"

The lawyer smiled disdainfully as the speaker left the room, to announce his visit to his mistress. He considered these threats merely as the ebullition of a disappointed man. Satisfied that he held him in his power—that he could bend or crush him at his pleasure—he paid but little attention to his words.

"Ah, Snape!" he said, as the pretended butler entered the room, "you have played your part admirably!"

"The last act, I hope," said the clerk; "for my position is becoming anything but pleasant! Despite my protestations that I thought you and Sir Phineas had been invited by my lady—my solemn asseverations

that I had never seen either of you before—they begin to suspect my complicity."

"Let them suspect it!"

"Oh, sir, you do not know Mrs. Williams!"

"But I know Sarah Tubby—which is much the same thing!" replied his employer. "Who would have thought," he added, bursting into a laugh, "that the old fool would have been caught so easily? But the older the tinder, the more readily it catches a spark! What would she say if she knew that you already had a wife?"

Mr. Snape looked very uncomfortable at the thought.

"And five children?"

The words had scarcely escaped his lips, when the door of the drawing-room was burst open, and the infuriated spinster—her eyes flashing fire—entered the drawing-room. Snape manoeuvred till he placed the lawyer between the waiting-maid and himself.

"Ah, Tubby," said the latter, who did not feel perfectly assured as to his position; "at your old tricks—listening!"

"And who would not listen," angrily demanded the disappointed Abigail, "when thieves were in the house? As for you, Mr. Quirk," she added, with a visible effort at self-control, "I don't want to have anything to say to you; but for that pitiful, lying, sneaking, contemptible rascal, whom I recommended to my lady out of charity—only let me get at him!"

"For Heaven's sake," whispered the terrified Mr. Snape, to his master, "do no such thing!"

"Your charity, Tubby," observed the lawyer, "be-gan, I suspect, like that of most persons, at home!"

"I deny your wicked, base insinuation!" exclaimed the waiting-maid; "I have refused better men than he is—as you ought to know!"

"Don't be violent!"

"I am not violent! I never was violent!" screamed the spinster; "only let me tear that villain's eyes out, and I'll be as gentle as a lamb—listen to anything you have to say!"

Without waiting to see whether this very reasonable proposal was accepted, Miss Tubby sprang with the agility of a wild cat—to which respectable animal, *par parenthèse*, she bore no slight resemblance—and fixed her long nails with fearful tenacity in the cheeks of the delinquent clerk—whose countenance, long before his master could interpose to save him, streamed with blood.

"There you sneak—you cheat!" she shrieked, rather than uttered, a fresh scratch accompanying each word; "that will teach you how to creep disguised into people's houses! Who has the laugh now?"

Evidently it was not the unhappy Mr. Snape, who felt inclined to do anything but laugh in the hands of the female fury.

It is impossible to say how far the infuriated spinster would have carried her vengeance, had not Lady Briancourt made her appearance. Her mistress was the only person who could calm the fiery temper of the waiting-maid, when thoroughly aroused. With all her faults, Sarah Tubby had proved herself faithful to her.

"Sarah," said her mistress, gravely, "is this your promise?"

"I could not help it, my lady!" replied the Abigail, bursting into tears, and at the same time reluctantly releasing her victim; "indeed I could not. Flesh and blood could not help it!"

"But skin and bones might!" exclaimed the clerk, as he rushed out of the room.

At the last retort, Miss Tubby looked as if she very much wished to follow him; but the presence of her ladyship restrained her.

"Let him go!" she added, with an air of magnanimity; "I have done with him!"

And a very fortunate thing it was for Mr. Snape that she had.

"He will not forget me!" she added, with a grim smile of satisfaction; "that is one comfort! And as for Mr. Quirk, the sneaking, pitiful cur, I'll—"

The gentleman thus apostrophised prudently took up a position behind one of the sofas.

The expletives of the enraged damsel were cut short by a gesture from Lady Briancourt, directing her to leave the room. The spinster, whose passion had somewhat cooled down since the vengeance she had inflicted on the clerk, obeyed her with evident reluctance: there were long arrears to settle between her and the lawyer, and it was not without an effort that she forbore so favourable an opportunity of paying them.

"I must hang that woman!" mentally ejaculated Mr. Quirk; "I shall never feel safe till I am rid of her!"

Could Sarah Tubby have read the intentions of the old man, not even the presence of Lady Briancourt would have restrained her. Perhaps, like that domestic animal which in character she so closely resembled, she fancied that she had more lives than one, or that one was not so completely at the mercy of the lawyer as he supposed.

Although Lady Briancourt was exceedingly pale, her manner was calm and self-possessed. Despite the connection which the marriage of her son had made between them, and the terrible hold he had acquired over her, she received him with the same haughty coolness as on their earlier acquaintance. Deliberately seating herself in an easy chair, she pointed to one at a distance from her, to intimate that he might take it.

For some time they remained gazing on each other in silence: despite his natural effrontery, the lawyer did not feel quite at his ease beneath her searching glance: he fancied that he could detect a spirit of mockery as well as defiance in it.

"I trust, Lady Briancourt, you feel as I do at this happy reunion of our family?"

"Our family!" repeated the lady, in a sarcastic tone. "Let it pass! Our family be it!"

"You will find your grandson all that you wish!" "Say, rather, interrupted the dowager, "all that you have made him—cold, selfish, mean, cowardly, and cruel! as unworthy of the name he bears, as you are worthy of that which all good men assign you! You see," she added, "that I know you both!"

The lawyer bit his lips. This was not exactly the kind of reception he was prepared for.

"Beware, Lady Briancourt!" he said.

"Do you threaten me?"

"No; I would persuade you! This hatred of your grandson is strange and unnatural! He possesses, whatever you may think, talents of no mean order, and an affectionate heart!"

"Indeed!" said her ladyship, sneeringly. "And this clear head and affectionate heart—what do they demand as the price of their forbearance?"

The lawyer smiled. He thought that it looked something like coming to business at last.

"My dear Lady Briancourt," he replied, "I knew that your naturally clear judgment would come to a right conclusion, and see the necessity of a family reconciliation! Your jointure, although it is unusually large for such a property, Sir Phineas, I am sure, would not wish to be diminished!"

"Vastly considerate!"

"But Broadlands! Now what can you possibly require with so large a property—at your time of life, too? The revenue must be a burthen, rather than a source of happiness! What I would propose is, that you should, as a proof of your affection to your grandson, resign your life-interest in it to him!"

"And does he know of this proposal?"

"Of course he does!" replied Mr. Quirk. "Although I am so nearly related to Sir Phineas, I should not have ventured to make such a proposition without his sanction! He is naturally desirous of marrying—of obtaining a standing in the political world worthy of his talents and his name!"

Although the form in which these proposals were put was perfectly respectful, the tone and manner of the speaker were those of a master, confident that he may exact what terms he pleases. Lady Briancourt became greatly agitated. As the crisis which she had long contemplated drew near, she felt her courage giving way.

"You know," she faltered, "that I have no power to dispose of Broadlands! It descends, on my death, to the child of my unhappy Clara!"

"The right of the young lady," coolly observed her visitor, "is at best a doubtful one; but even that may be reconciled!"

"How so?"

"Sir Phineas saw your grand-daughter a few weeks since at Fulton, and fell deeply in love with her; although, with his title and expectations, he might certainly make a much more eligible match! Still, to heal all family differences, he is not only willing but anxious to offer his hand and title to his cousin!"

"What!" exclaimed her ladyship, in a tone of deep emotion; "sacrifice her young, pure heart to the sordid dreams of avarice and calculation! Compel her to a soulless union with a being she abhors! Never—never!"

"Never" is a strong word!" drily observed the lawyer. "I have seldom known it to prove final; yet, as the price of your consent, I offer you security!"

"What if I refuse?"

Mr. Quirk shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"Speak out, man!" exclaimed her ladyship, impatiently; "let me know the worst, that I may not hereafter have to reproach myself with an act, the consequences of which you little dream of yet!"

"In that case," answered her visitor, with great deliberation, "it would be my painful duty to produce a certain letter, written by your late husband a few hours before his death; and cause a judicial inquiry to be made into the cause of that death: which letter, and several corroborative papers—"

"You stole!" interrupted Lady Briancourt, indignantly, "like a midnight thief! and now would use them to rob my orphan grandchild of her inheritance!"

"Stole!" repeated Mr. Quirk. "No—no! I obtained them!" he added, complacently. "And as for robbing your grand-daughter, the fortune may still be hers, if she will only listen to reason, and share it with her cousin!"

"And is your grandson aware of the menace you have just held out to me?" demanded Lady Briancourt.

"Perfectly aware of it!" replied the lawyer.

"And sanctions it?"

"Most assuredly! He is determined to keep no measures with you, should your want of proper affection and consideration for his welfare drive him to extremities! Of course," he added, "he would not take any part in the prosecution himself!"

"Then Heaven decide between us!" exclaimed the aged woman, in a tone of deep emotion. "I have warred against my duty and my reason, but am driven from my hold at last! Fool!" she continued, bitterly: "fool—fool! you have mistaken the tongue of the worm for the sting of the serpent! I reject your offers—scorn and defy you! Never shall your worthless grandson inherit an acre of Broadlands, or become the husband of my murdered Clara's child!"

Mr. Quirk was thunderstruck at the sudden ebullition of pride and resolution. At first he thought it a mere outbreak of passion; but the lady continued, in a still sterner tone:

"You may drag me before the tribunals of my country," she said; "but even there I may find the means not only to escape your malice, but overwhelm my enemies with infamy and confusion—strip the jackdaw of his borrowed plumes, and show both him and his adviser to the world in their true colours!"

"Mad!" thought the lawyer, who began to feel perfectly mystified; "she must be mad! I will return to-morrow, Lady Briancourt," he said; "reflection will induce you to change your determination."

"Never!"

"It is a serious charge you brave!" he added.

"I am prepared to meet it! Rest assured," she added, firmly, "that the hangman's grasp is nearer to your neck than mine!"

With these words, she rang the bell, and directed the faithful Barnes to open the door for Mr. Quirk.

"I shall call to-morrow," he said, "for your answer, Lady Briancourt; for your own sake I will not take it now. You had better consult with your accomplice, your friend Mr. Barnes here, I mean: he will tell you that escape is impossible. You outwitted me once, but it will be my own fault if you do so a second time."

Both the domestic and his mistress smiled disdainfully as the door closed upon Mr. Quirk, who, upon uttering his threat, immediately left the house; for once even his sagacity was at fault.

"Suicide!" he muttered, as he walked to his office, "no, no! she is too fond of life for that. Perhaps she imagines that so many years have elapsed that no traces of the poison may remain—pshaw! I have heard Faraday declare that he could detect it thirty years after death, and her husband has only been dead twenty-five."

In consequence of the extraordinary reception he had met with, the old man resolved to start for Loxden that very night, leaving Sir Phineas to watch that Lady Briancourt did not make her escape from England, a task which, from a judicious regard to his own interests, he felt perfectly assured his grandson would perform with the most scrupulous care.

"Barnes," said his mistress, as soon as they were alone; "you heard all that passed between me and the grandfather of Sir Phineas Briancourt?"

"I did, my lady," replied the old man; "I waited, as you directed, in the ante-room. The insolent cur. But you answered him nobly like yourself. Believe me," he added, respectfully, "that I admired and pitied you. Have you any orders to give touching your departure?"

"Are the relays prepared?"

"At every stage."

"And the means to quit the house unobserved?"

added his mistress, in a tone of anxiety.

"Assured beyond the fear of interruption," answered Mr. Barnes. "Lady Briancourt," he continued, "I am a poor man, and a humble one, but if by the sacrifice of my life this humiliation and shame could pass from you, I would freely pay the price—the grandeur of such an atonement will efface the memory of the sin. Fear not but you shall reach the manor-house long before your enemies entertain a suspicion of your departure."

With this promise he left the room.

"Atonement," repeated the unhappy lady; "it is my fate—why should I shrink from it? Yet it is hard to endure the vulgar scoff—to be pointed at as the thing I blush to name—to bear the pity of the world! God," she added, clasping her hands, "will strengthen me in

my fearful task, and take me to His mercy when 'tis ended!"

Sinking on her knees, the once haughty woman for some time engaged in mental prayer. Whilst thus occupied, an arm stole gently round her neck—it was Mary's.

"Grandmamma!" whispered the innocent girl, "you are unhappy—let me pray with you!"

In the hour of her deepest anguish and humiliation, the child of the murdered Clara Briancourt consoled her.

CHAPTER LIV.

Unequal task, a passion to resign,
For hearts so touched, so lost, so pierced as mine.
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love—how often hate;
How often hope, despair, repent, regret,
Conceal, disdain—do all things but forget. Pope.

Those who have loved may imagine the night of tears, regrets, irresolution, and despair which Jane had passed after the discovery of the secret of her birth.

"A felon's daughter!" she murmured, as Mary vainly attempted to soothe her; "a thing for scorn to point at! Do not touch me, Mary," she added; "there is pollution in the contact! I am not worthy to approach you now!"

"You are my sister!" exclaimed the affectionate girl, pressing her still closer to her bosom; "my own, dear, good, and virtuous sister. If that fearful man be indeed your father, his crimes can reflect no dishonour upon you. Those who loved you previously will love you now the more, to console you for the misfortune of having a parent whom you can neither respect nor love!"

Jane shook her head incredulously.

"You judge others," she replied, "from your own true, generous heart! But they will not judge as you judge, or feel as you feel! No, Mary," she added, "my dream of life is passed. I will bring shame to no man's hearth—my misery shall be borne alone!"

"Not alone!" said her sister—for such in affection, if not in blood, was the tie between them; "think you I could know happiness if you were wretched? I am sure that Harry loves you—you will find him unchanged."

Jane fixed her eyes anxiously upon her, as if to read whether her words and her convictions were the same. Mary was a poor hand at dissembling, and a slight blush suffused her cheek.

"Do you think so?" demanded the unhappy girl.

"Why should I think otherwise?" answered Mary, trying to evade the question.

"Because you have both seen and felt the change!"

When the dreadful scene occurred, when the man who calls himself your cousin and the lawyer entered the drawing-room, and addressed your grandmother by her title, Charles Harland drew closer to your side, whilst Harry shrank from mine. He," she added, with a convulsive sob—"my father—had not claimed me then; and when he did claim me, Sir Cuthbert Sinclair and yourself were the only ones who looked kindly on me!"

"Sir Cuthbert is a generous, noble-minded man!" observed Mary; "and, rest assured, will never withdraw his consent because—"

The speaker paused, not knowing how to complete the sentence without wounding the feelings she was so anxious to soothe.

"Because I am a felon's daughter," said Jane. "Speak it at once. I must learn to bear it, and it does not sound so harshly from your lips."

"Harry, I am sure, will never speak of it, or think of it," continued her sister.

"It would kill me!" exclaimed Jane; "from his lips it would kill me! I little thought that I should rejoice his affection for me was weakened—it renders my task less painful!"

"Your task?"

"Yes—of bidding him farewell—of giving him back the faith a crown would not have tempted me to have broken! Not a word!" she added, checking with a kiss the remonstrance upon the lips of Mary; "I cannot reason, but I feel that I am right; the daughter of a pardoned convict can never be the wife of Harry Sinclair!"

Mary was silenced. She felt that her sister was right—felt that, had the same fearful discovery overwhelmed her, she would have decided as she had done.

The following morning, Harry and Charles both made their appearance at Brompton. The latter, who had consulted with his father, assured the gentle Mary that no discovery, however it might affect Lady Briancourt, could lessen his attachment—that the rector had even given a willing assent to their immediate marriage. It was to impart this intelligence that the happy girl sought the presence of her grandmother.

"And Jane?" said the old lady—for, strange to say

she felt an interest in the welfare of her protégée scarcely less sincere than for her own child.

"Alas, grandmamma, I fear for the happiness of my sister. Harry's nature is far more worldly than that of Charles. She has resolved on releasing him from his engagement!"

"And she has decided wisely!" replied her ladyship; "with her proud spirit and generous heart, a reproach would kill her! The first pang is the least!"

"But she loves him!" urged Mary, who judged from her own feelings of the sufferings of her sister

(To be continued.)

AMERICAN ROCK-OIL.—American rock-oil is now exported to almost every quarter of the globe. From the 1st of January, until the close of October, 1862, there were 5,195,481 gallons shipped from New York alone. For the same period this year, New York has exported 15,503,166 gallons; Philadelphia, 4,268,244 gallons; Boston, 1,604,146 gallons; Baltimore, 806,961 gallons. In round numbers, the total value of the exports from the ports above-named, from January 1 until the close of October, will not fall short of 10,000,000 dollars.

THE WAR IN NEW ZEALAND.—The latest advices from New Zealand bring accounts of fresh conflicts between our troops and the Maories. In one of these twenty or thirty of the natives are said to have been put *hors de combat*, and Captain Swift, of the 65th Regiment, was killed. In another encounter one of our officers and several privates were severely wounded. At the latest dates General Cameron was endeavouring to bring on a general engagement at Meremere, but it was feared that the natives, who were reported to be 2,000 strong there, would evacuate the place, and so prolong the struggle.

BRUNSWICK'S JEWELS AGAIN.—A thief has just gained and lost one of the largest prizes ever made by the criminal fraternity. Shaw, English groom to the Duke of Brunswick, who resides in Paris, had learnt from his master the secret of opening his diamond-chest. This was of iron, and contained diamonds valued at £320,000, besides large sums in gold. He accordingly seized them while the duke was out, and, with the usual stupidity of his class, made at once for England. The police thought, of course, that he would do that, telegraphed to the ports, and arrested him at Boulogne with all the diamonds upon him. Shaw affirms that he only gave way to the sudden temptation, and the duke, made wise by experience, proposes to deposit his jewels with the Bank of England or France.

DESICCATED VEGETABLES.—Vegetables and meats deprived of moisture and submitted to severe pressure, will remain unchanged and preserve their natural taste for a long period in any climate. A very large business is now carried on in New York in the way of desiccating vegetables for the army and navy, by the New York Desiccating Company. About 150 persons are employed in the establishment, and the quantity of vegetables desiccated this year will amount to 56,000 baskets of tomatoes, 442 tons of string beans, 8,000 bushels of green peas, 15,000 barrels of turnips, 30,000 barrels of carrots, 23,000 heads of cabbage, 12,000 barrels of potatoes, 20,000 barrels of onions, 100 tons of parsley, and a moderate quantity of some other vegetables. The vegetables are picked, cleaned, cut up and grated; they are then dried and deprived entirely of moisture, after which they are formed into flat cakes, under severe hydrostatic pressure. A cake weighing 7 lb. contains sufficient vegetables to make 42 gallons of good soup. They are excellent for sea-voyages, and large quantities have been finished on army contracts for soldiers in the field and invalids in the national hospitals.

REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING A NEWSPAPER.—Mr. A. believes he shall discontinue his paper, because it contains no political news. B is decidedly of opinion that the same paper dabbles too freely in the political movements of the day. C don't take it, besides, it is all one side, and D, whose opinion it generally expresses, does not like it, because it is not severe enough upon the Opposition. E thinks it does not pay due attention to fashionable literature. F cannot bear the flimsy notions of idle writers. G will not suffer a paper upon his table which ventures to express an opinion against slavery. H rever patronizes one that lacks the moral courage to expose the evils of the day. I declares he does not want a paper filled with the hedge-podge doings and undoings of the legislature. J considers that paper the best which gives the greatest quantity of such proceedings. K patronizes the paper for the light and lively reading which they contain. L wonders that the press does not publish sermons and such other solid matter. M will not read a paper that will not expose the evils of sectarianism. N is decidedly of opinion that the pulpit, and not the press, should meddle with reli-

gious dogmas. O likes to read the police reports. P, whose appetite is less morbid, would not have a paper in which these silly reports are printed, in his house. Q likes anecdotes. R won't take a paper that publishes them, and says that murders and dreadful accidents ought not to be put into papers. S complains that this miserable paper gave no account of that highway robbery last week. T says the type is too small. U thinks it is too large. V stops his paper, because it contains nothing but advertisements. W wants to see what is for sale. X will not take his paper unless it is left at his door before sunrise; while Y declares he will not pay for it if left so early; that it is stolen from his house before he is up. And last of all, come the complaints of some of the ladies who declare the paper very uninteresting, because it does not, every day, contain a list of marriages, just as if it was possible for the poor printer to marry people without a license, and whether the parties will or no. But the variety of newspaper-readers is too great for the present review, and we "give them up" with a determination to pursue the "even tenor of our way," in offering to the public such reading as, in our humble opinion, will prove most useful to them, and as interesting as possible.

THE ROMANCE OF A DEVONSHIRE HEIRESS.

Miss NEMO is the daughter of a clergyman and a doctor of divinity, not long dead, and who resided at his rectory in the county of Devon. The lady is about 25 years of age, good-looking, and accomplished, and it caused no small trouble to the family some time previous to her father's death to find that she had formed a clandestine acquaintance with a stonemason to whom was entrusted the repair of her father's church. On this discovery she was sent to Exeter to reside with a brother, that there might be broken the tie she had formed. Only a short time afterwards she eloped with her "lover of low degree" to H—, where she remained with his friends until the marriage preliminaries could be arranged. On the morning fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom not being forthcoming at the appointed time, the lady went in search of him, when, to her astonishment, he informed her he was in no particular hurry, and should not marry yet.

On finding herself thus deceived, the unfortunate girl ran away, and waded into a sheet of water waist-high in her wedding-dress, from which predicament, however, she was luckily extricated by two labouring men, taken back to where she had been staying, and eventually home. A few days afterwards the stonemason lover called at her residence, but was refused an interview by her brother. He then went to another of her relatives, a lady of wealth and position, with whom he endeavoured to turn his heartlessness to pecuniary profit, offering to marry somebody else if a hundred pounds were given him, adding the interesting information that three other ladies were already in love with him. This extortionate demand was refused; but the mercenary man was offered a handsome present if he became the husband of either of the three candidates he had mentioned. This, it seems, did not suit "his book," and fortunately his cupidity effected that which nothing else could do, determined the young lady to throw him off altogether, the result being that he is now a presiding and unmarried genius in a common public house.

A short time after this occurrence the father of Miss Nemo died, leaving her a very respectable income; but in order to prevent her from forming a connection with anybody beneath her, the receipt of this income was made to be contingent on her remaining single, to revert to her only if she became a widow. Her brother having succeeded her father in his ecclesiastical office, she resided alone at lodgings in Exeter up to the middle of last summer.

One morning, however, while sitting at her open window, she saw on the opposite side a man begging from door to door. She rang the bell for her servant, and ordered the man to be fetched. He was introduced into her room, served with refreshments, during, or after which, she requested to hear his history.

The beggar informed her that he was connected with a very high family in Ireland, from whom he ran away when he was 14 years of age, and had not returned since. He travelled in foreign parts, and eventually enlisted in a foreign army, where he struck his superior officer, and was sentenced to be shot. That punishment, however, was subsequently mitigated to hard labour for life in the mines. He underwent some years of his punishment, which was the cause of deformity on his right side, one shoulder becoming considerably lower than the other. After some years he succeeded in escaping from the mines, returned to England, enlisted as a soldier, but having deserted from his regiment, was taken up, punished, and turned out, and branded with the letter D on the shoulder, which mark he showed our heroine.

Since that he had been compelled to earn his livelihood as a beggar.

This pathetic recital seems to have moved the susceptible heart of the lady, for she forthwith interested herself for him with various contributors to the Strangers' Friendly Society, and rigged him out with linen and outer garments, brushes, combs and other articles necessary for the proper performance of his toilette. This done, she visited him at a notoriously common lodging-house, in a back lane, but being disgusted with that habitation, she obtained lodgings for him at an eating-house, where, when he was duly installed, she visited him, exchange visits being made by the gentleman at the lady's lodgings. Not content with these marks of favour, she purchased for him a handsome ring, receiving one made of his hair in return, the latter, as well as the former, being, of course, paid for by her.

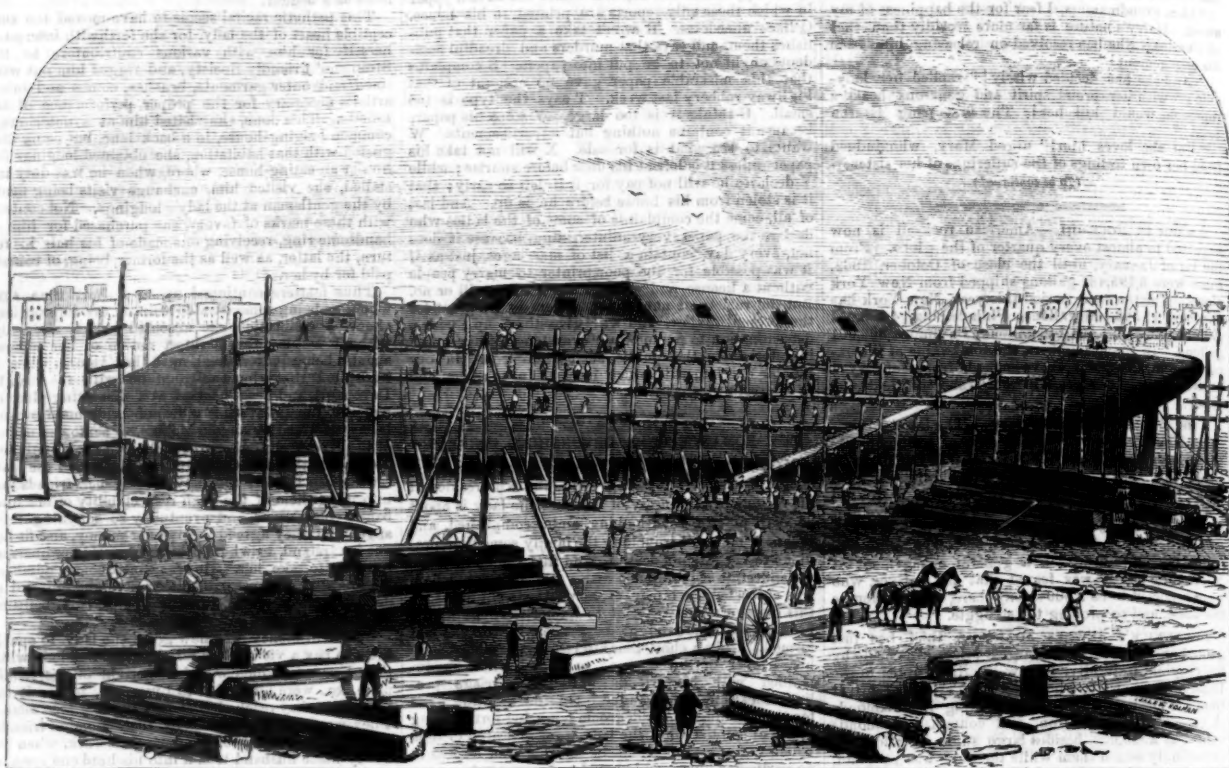
Thus matters continued up to a short time ago, when, on being remonstrated with on the impropriety of such a connection, she absented herself suddenly without leaving the slightest notion of her whereabouts being entertained, until her return, when it transpired that she had gone off with the man to Devonport, and been married, at a dissenting place of worship, the interesting office of bridesmaid having been performed by an old woman, a sextoness at one of the Exeter churches, whom she had taken with her. Money by this time was getting short, and the pair returned to Exeter, the lady visiting her friends and informing them of the high respectability of her husband's connections, and eventually so softening their anger that they agreed to give her money, and fit her out for Ireland, to which country she said her husband intended to take her. He was consequently admitted to several interviews with the family, and no end of dresses were provided for the young lady, befitting her entrance into "polite Irish society."

Sufficient money was now given the lady to enable them to pay a visit to her relatives in London, while their boxes, in which was her portion of the family plate, &c., were forwarded to Liverpool, to await the pair when they reached that port en route for Ireland. They were received kindly by their London friends, whom they visited often during a week, when the newly-made husband took it into his head one evening to go down into the kitchen of a friend's house to "smoke a pipe," and not returning in what his wife considered reasonable time, she went in search of him, but searched in vain. With some misgiving, she proceeded to their lodgings, when she found her boxes broken open, and every article of value they contained gone. Without delay, she sought aid, and searched the metropolis for days—her efforts being eventually crowned by finding her husband in a low pot-house, every penny he had taken from her having been squandered. She induced her degraded spouse to go with her to the railway station, when, on making the names of her relatives known, she obtained a pass for both to Exeter, but on their arrival there they were entirely discarded by all their former friends. Having by some means obtained a little money, the couple proceeded to Plymouth, and only a few days since were located in anything but a first-class house, in one of the Three Towns. An offer was sent the lady by her friends to receive her again, if she would leave the man who had treated her so badly; but this she, with womanly heart and head, peremptorily declined. She will shortly become a mother, and she has expressed her determination to beg, or even starve, with the husband of her rash choice. It will occasion no surprise to the reader to learn that it has been found by a letter from Ireland, couched in a peculiar diction, that the man's high connections there are a myth. So ends, for the present, this remarkable and painful episode in the life of an accomplished Devonshire heiress.

BAR SILVER.—Bar silver is firm, at 61½d. per ounce. There is an active demand for India, and about £400,000 will be shipped from Marseilles to the East within the next few days.

THE CAT.—Since January last, twenty-four marines have been flogged at Woolwich, the number of lashes inflicted being 1,200. This is exclusive of the men who have had their sentences of fifty lashes commuted to a term of imprisonment, and twenty-five lashes in the prison.

THE DEATHS IN LONDON LAST WEEK WERE 1,357, an amount less by 77 than the average. Fifty-three were persons aged 80 years and upwards, and eight of these were 90 and upwards. Amongst them were two centenarians—the widow of a bookbinder died at the age of 100 years, at 33, New Compton street, St. Giles; she never had occasion to call in a doctor, except once for an accident, and both sight and memory were good to the last;—a farmer died at the age of 101 years, at 9, Smith Street, Clerkenwell; he had never taken medicine in his life. Last summer he was able to make hay and dig potatoes.



THE STEAM RAM DUNDERBERG.

THE great steam ram Dunderberg, of which we give a representation, is an American vessel, built by the Federal Government, and when finished, launched and armed, it is said, will be the most powerful man-of-war afloat.

She is 378 feet long, 68 feet wide, and 32 feet deep. The armour on the side is 6½ feet thick of timber and 4½ inches thick of iron; on the casemate it is 3 feet of wood and 3½ inches of iron. She will have two turrets, with two guns of heavy calibre in each, and six broadside and two pivot guns in the casemate. Her rig will be half-mast, with yards and sails. The forward part of the vessel, for 50 feet of solid timber and iron, constitutes the ram. The engines are to be of proportionate power, and will propel her probably 16 miles an hour. She will not, however, be ready for service for a year, the magnitude of her proportions requiring such immense time and labour.

The events of the American war have given to the navy of the United Northern States, an interest and importance which will probably extend beyond the war itself, and it is singularly opportune that with the means which has enabled us to give a correct engraving of the Dunderberg, we have at the same time, received the report of the American Naval Secretary of State. By that instrument we find that the naval force of the Northern States consists of 588 vessels completed and in course of completion, and of these 75 are iron-clad or armoured steamers. While naval architecture and naval armaments, however, are in such a transitional state as they are at present, passing like the grub of the butterfly, from one condition to another, it is the next thing to an impossibility to predict what may yet be the character assumed by naval warfare. It would appear that the Americans have not, hitherto, been directing their energies, so much to the establishment of a powerful navy for general purposes, as for the construction of vessels specially to act in their own waters. In the opinion of the secretary, the Northern States do not possess a single vessel fit for the duties of foreign warfare, except in regard to defences of the coast. All their new iron-clads, whether constructing or already constructed, are mere harbour ships or coasters and nothing more. They have proved themselves, as observed by the secretary, "to be well adapted for harbour defence and coast service," and in some emergencies have, from their great powers of endurance, shown themselves to be efficient in offensive operations. This, however, is no great praise; and, whatever may be the

[THE NORTH AMERICAN STEAM-RAM MAN-OF-WAR.]

merits of American ships of war, we believe that they are and can, at least, be equalled, if not surpassed, in their general capabilities by the builders on this side of the Atlantic.

There is a question, however, of no ordinary interest intimately connected with this subject. It is the character of the vessels which are most suitable for sea service. Whilst America has, at present, no ships adapted to this service, she must have some as soon as possible, and as this is trenching upon a part of the subject which, sooner or later, may touch ourselves, the opinion of the Secretary of the Northern Union is not to be slightly treated or passed over as valueless and, therefore, unimportant. What we gather from his report would seem to be that, in his opinion, enormous size is one of the primary conditions of a good man-of-war. Such a vessel, in his estimation, should not only carry machinery of sufficient power to insure great speed and endurance sufficiently heavy for any assault, but should be capable of stowing away such a supply of fuel as would suffice for long cruises without the necessity of re-coaling. Upon this plan our own Great Eastern was built, and with an eye to the same condition, the Dunderberg is also probably constructed; but the mind of the secretary would seem to have contemplated the construction of vessels of even larger dimensions than this specimen, for he says, "The cost, as shown by the propositions received (from the builders, engineers, &c.), for a ship of the necessary magnitude, was so great that it was deemed advisable to enter into no contract involving so large an expenditure, except by the express sanction of Congress." This passage is certainly sufficiently suggestive of the size of the contemplated vessel being of almost appalling enormity.

Whether the sentiments of the North American Secretary will have any effect on the British mind in suggesting measures and means for the enlargement of its own navy, we cannot say; but in the message of President Lincoln, it is stated that the American armoured vessels, completed and in service in their navy, or under contract and approaching completion, "are believed to exceed in number those of any other power." Whilst this is asserted, however, it must be remembered that these are to be relied on only for harbour defence and coast service, and that others of greater strength and capacity will be necessary for cruising purposes, and for maintaining their position upon the ocean. To continue the already begun and further contemplated operations, new navy-yards will have to be built, or those at present in existence will require to be adapted to the change which has taken

place in naval vessels and naval warfare. This is necessitated by the introduction of steam as a motive power for ships-of-war. Accordingly, attention is especially invited to this subject, and as America possesses advantages almost superior to any other country in her resources of iron and timber, with inexhaustible quantities of fuel in the immediate neighbourhood of both, and all in close proximity to navigable waters, she will, in time, no doubt accomplish the magnitude of her object. If we, however, are to measure our own proceedings in these matters, by the estimate of the case formed by the American Secretary, we must conclude that we are advancing on the right path, and that the only fault to be found with our Minotaur—represented in our last week's number—and similar vessels, though they are, on this side of the Atlantic, larger than any men-of-war afloat, is that they are, according to transatlantic notions, not yet large enough.

INSURANCES.—It is said large insurances are being effected in England on the life of the Empress of the French, the total being £200,000.

FATAL ACCIDENT AFTER A WEDDING.—A lamentable accident has occurred at the Château of Janowitz, near Kupferberg, in Silesia, the residence of Count de Stolberg-Wernigerode. The château had been a scene of festivity during the day, on the occasion of the marriage of the count's eldest daughter to the Prince de Reuss; but in the evening, when the ladies retired to dress for a ball, the count's youngest daughter accidentally set fire to her dress while lighting a candle, and was instantly enveloped in flames. The count and several other persons ran to the girl's assistance and soon extinguished the fire, but she was so dreadfully burnt that death ensued a few hours after.

RUSSIAN OPPRESSION.—The last news from Lithuania is that the son of Mouravieff has ordered 24 confiscations of entire villages, and has sequestered the estates of 1,994 persons, among whom are 279 peasants, 82 officials, 18 Jews, and 86 priests. A lady named Thecla Iwicka, well known for her charities, and having 200 orphans under her care, has been forbidden by Mouravieff to continue to occupy herself with the education of the children she has thus adopted. The buildings in which they were lodged, and which was given to Miss Iwicka by the Countess Carolina Czapska, have been confiscated for the use of the military, and the children either sent back to their friends or placed in Russian establishments under priests of the Greek religion.



MAN AND HIS IDOL.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE LAST HOPE GONE.

Have I not sworn? Am I not trusted? Good!
Tennyson.

Is telling a story it is sometimes necessary to depart or a moment from the main thread, so that the listener may not lose sight of those minor incidents which are, nevertheless, important to the great issue.

So I feel it necessary to interrupt, for a chapter, the narrative of Mark's examination, to show what was happening in respect to that matter of intense moment to Kingston Meredith—the question of his right to the St. Omer earldom and estates.

That question, by the way, as he knew well enough, involved also the hand of the Lady Blanche. He was sufficiently man of the world to see that, without being mercenary, the earl would give his daughter readily enough to the man who could preserve to him his rank and station, both so terribly imperilled at that moment.

"Yes, yes," Kingston said to himself, in a sort of rapture, "if I could only place myself on the earl's level, all would be well. I have no longer any fear that Blanche's love has gone from me. There has come into my heart, I know not wherefore, the calm, blissful assurance that she is true to the vows she has spoken, terribly as circumstances have witnessed against her. So it would not be for my rank, for my wealth, that she would consent to be mine. I should not buy her. I should but remove a barrier which is insurmountable. As to Mark—"

He thought for a moment with clouded brow.

"Was Frank right?" he said. "Is it possible that what I have done to bring that ruffian to justice can cause them to regard me with deeper loathing and detestation? The countless may do so; but the earl—surely in his heart he must thank me; and as for Blanche—nothing shall shake my faith in her."

He sighed, in spite of his words.

Faith sustained him; but even faith in the one we love is not proof against the heart-sickness which deferred hope brings with it. When the gulf of doubt and difficulty separated Meredith from his beloved, it had hardly taxed his patience more.

She was so near, so very near, at this moment, and yet so far!

Only one obstacle divided them; but what an obstacle!

Fate, acting in his behalf, had brought about a

[RABY'S SEARCH IN THE REGISTERS STOPPED.]

series of events almost miraculous. He had discovered, by unsought means, facts of which he had not entertained a suspicion. That he was the orphan son of a gentleman had been his highest boast. Now, he felt beyond all question that he was, in fact, the son of a peer, and heir to a noble name and splendid heritage.

But, that step gained, he could advance no further. The course he was treading had

Become the sea-cliff pathway, broken short,
And ending in a ruin.

All he had learned and gained was valueless without the one link—the proof of Earl Rupert's marriage with the mother of his father; in short, the proof of his own legitimacy.

But how to get that?

Plunkett, the lawyer, as we have found, had been very sanguine of its being found at Montreaux, where the marriage took place, and he had despatched his clerk Raby in quest of it, in the firm conviction that he would bring it back with him. Not for an instant did the lawyer question his judgment in selecting such a messenger as Raby for such a duty. It was onerous, he knew, and Raby had committed himself in a manner that might have won him the felon's stamp; but Plunkett prided himself on his knowledge of human nature, and he believed that Raby would not impose upon, but return with grateful interest, the kindness he had shown him.

Was he mistaken?

The day fixed for Raby's return had passed: he had not come; he had not written.

It looked suspicious. Plunkett shook his head, and stammered out disjointed expressions of doubt and uncertainty; yet he did not give in. His faith in his own power to read human nature was strong. If it should be shaken in this case, he felt that he could never trust to his own sagacity again. So he bore up, confident, in spite of qualms of misgiving—and hopeful against hope.

Still Raby did not come.

Plunkett had to state the fact to Meredith, as he called by appointment, to know what had happened. Of course Meredith knew nothing of the character of the messenger sent, and so, when he heard that he had delayed his return, he took it as a good omen.

"He must be making a very searching scrutiny," he remarked.

"Very," replied Plunkett, drily.

"You are afraid of this delay?"

"Well, I am not so sanguine as I was."

At those words Meredith's heart sank within him.

They seemed to rise up like a mist, and blot out the image of Blanche throned in his heart.

While they spoke there was a commotion in the outer office, faintly heard through the double doors which separated it from Mr. Plunkett's private room. A second after, those doors were thrown open abruptly, and the lawyer and Meredith, turning with startled looks, beheld an apparition which, for an instant, rendered them speechless.

It was Raby who staggered rather than walked into the office, so changed, so wild, excited, frenzied in his aspect, that he seemed utterly changed. Without heeding either his employer or the presence of the client by his side, the clerk lurched forward to a vacant chair, and threw himself into it.

"Thank God!" was the fervent exclamation that escaped his lips.

"Raby," cried Plunkett, as soon as he could subdue his amazement, "what has happened?"

"All is lost!" exclaimed the clerk, in a tone of utter despair.

"You have deceived me, betrayed my interests," said Plunkett, severely.

"No, no, believe me!"

"I don't. I can't. Why do you come here in this state?"

"You shall know. I will explain all," said Raby, half-imploringly.

"Pretty explanation!" said the lawyer. "You were to have been here yesterday. Why didn't you come? And what is the meaning of this play-acting and going-on? I was a fool to trust you. I might have known what would come of it. A born fool!"

"Oh, sir, sir, hear me, and then condemn me if you choose!" pleaded the clerk, half-falling on his knees as he spoke.

His manner brought conviction to the heart of Meredith. He saw clearly enough the man's agitation. He could not doubt that it was genuine.

"At least hear him," he said.

A grunt was the only response of the old lawyer, who probably affected more than he felt, though he was annoyed at what he believed was only a piece of acting on the part of the unfaithful clerk.

Raby, fain to content himself with this slight encouragement, began.

"When I left this office, sir," he said, "I posted off with all the speed I could to fulfil the task you had entrusted to me. Within a few hours I had left England, and I did not allow myself a moment's rest till I had reached Montreaux."

"Oh, you got there, did you?" growled Plunkett.

"I did, and at once presented my credentials. I

obtained permission to search the registers, and set to work. It was not an easy duty. The registers were badly kept and in a contracted hand, which made it very difficult for me, as an Englishman, to decipher them. Partly they were written in contracted French, partly in Latin. My slight knowledge of both languages served me a little, and but a little, in assuring myself that no entry of importance was passed over. To increase my difficulties, I soon found that there was no system whatever in spelling names, especially those of foreigners. English names, when they did occur, were so disguised, that it was almost impossible to recognise them."

"Well, well, go on!" cried Plunkett, impatiently.

"Two days," resumed Raby, "I continued my task, spending hours in a small, vault-like room attached to the church, so dark, that it was necessary for me to burn a lamp, even when the bright sunshine was glowing without. In those two days I discovered nothing. On the third day when I went, accompanied by what we in England would call the sexton, I found to my astonishment, on the door being unlocked, that a stranger was already engaged in searching the registers. It was a Frenchman. The book he had in hand was the one I had left half-explored over night."

"Pardon me," I said, addressing him, "you require that particular volume?"

"I do," was his answer.

"That is unfortunate," I said, "as I also am engaged upon it."

"I know you are," was his reply.

"What! you know me?" I asked.

"Certainly; your name is Edmund Raby. You are a young notary. You have come from England to search these registers for a nefarious purpose—you see, I know all."

"At these words my blood mounted to my brow—I felt a sudden inclination to seize the wretch by the throat, and strangle him for the imputation he had cast upon me."

"You mistake," I said, as calmly as I was able. "Though you have learned my name, you have yet to learn that I am an Englishman—a man of honour—and that I, like the rest of my countrymen, never suffer an aspersion to be cast on my motives of action!"

"He only looked at me with a sneer."

"You don't suppose that I shall offer to fight a notary's clerk, do you?" he asked.

"I don't know," was my hot reply, "but if you did I have an opinion that the notary's clerk would disgrace himself by accepting the challenge."

"These words had hardly escaped my lips, when, raising a lithe, elastic cane which lay upon his hat before him, he swept it with a curse across my face. The blow stung me to madness. I felt blood trickle into my mouth—I saw blood and fire mingled. In an instant I had pounced upon the wretch and thrown him to the ground. He rose—I recollect that. I can see his white face, swollen beneath the blow I had dealt. I know that we closed, that there was some up-and-down fighting—wild, extravagant, reckless. Once I was thrown, and his fingers were clutching at my throat. Then, by some frenzied effort, I was uppermost, and was threatening to murder him. At last came the catastrophe."

"You killed him?" demanded Plunkett.

"No. Would to Heaven I had!"

"What! Worse than that happened?"

"Yes, for I could have atoned for the life of that bond with my own. As it is, I can make no restitution for the evil my unuly passion has brought about."

He turned to Kingston Meredith as he spoke.

The young man was listening with breathless attention. He dared not speak, lest a single word of Raby's might escape him.

"One long, fearful struggle ended our contest," continued Raby. "In the midst of it the lamp, by the light of which the Frenchman had commenced his researches, was overthrown, the flaming oil ran over the books, they ignited, and in an instant the vault-like room was in a blaze. My first thought was of escape. Not so his who had brought this terrible calamity upon me—for it was his hand which had done the mischief. Directly he saw the flames rising around us, he clutched at my undefended throat."

"This is your act!" he cried.

"Liar!" I shouted back, in my fury and astonishment.

"Tis in vain, ha, ha!—in vain that you seek to deny it," he retorted. "I told you that you came here for a wicked and nefarious purpose—you have accomplished it!"

"The wretch then threw me, as he spoke, upon the flames. See, my hair is singed, my hands are burned. I am suffering torture, even now! The agony of the fire and the terror which the gathering smoke caused me well-nigh drove me frantic. My only thought was of escape. But my persecutor had no such purpose. Watching his opportunity, he opened the door

of the room—he must have known its secret—and, rushing forth with a wild laugh, closed it with a crash upon me."

"From that instant despair took possession of me. I gave myself up for lost. I could not cry for help. I was choked, blinded, and I only know that I sank cowering down by the door, muttering some childish prayer in my utter extremity. Then I lost all consciousness."

"When I again awoke to a sense of life, I was in the cell of a prison, black as midnight, noisome as a sewer."

"There for hours and hours I lay suffering martyrdom. My hands raged with the fire, my mouth and throat were so parched that I would have given all I had ever possessed in the world for one drop of water. At length the jailer came. He was a Swiss, and a decent fellow, in spite of his vocation."

"From this man I learned that the flames had been subdued before they had destroyed the church; that I had been discovered, and life not being extinct, had at once been denounced by the villain who had so grossly insulted me, and who, as I afterward recollected, had crossed with me in the boat from England."

"He was a spy, then, depend upon it!" interrupted Plunkett. "Did you hear his name?"

"Only that he was called Victor."

"I will make a note of that!" remarked Plunkett, writing down the name as he spoke. "Well, and what followed?"

"Why," returned Raby, "it appears that this wretch had denounced me to the authorities as having gone to the church for the purpose of destroying the registers. He declared that his suspicions had been aroused by my concealing matches about my person before leaving the hotel at which we both stayed—a fact unknown to me—and that he had concealed himself in the registry-room, and had seen me deliberately set fire to the records."

"The wretch!" cried Meredith. "What followed?"

"On learning this, I felt that my situation was desperate. Besides, I was driven to madness at the thought of the irreparable mischief that might have been done, and the suspicion that I knew would attach to me in your breasts on the failure of my expedition. It seemed to me that I must leave that place or die. So extreme was the feeling of the moment, that I actually contemplated the murder of my jailer—not shrinking from it as a crime, but coolly planning it as a necessity, as I crouched down in the darkness and loneliness, giving myself up to desperation."

"Thank Heaven that crime was spared me!"

"In the dead of night, I rose from my straw pallet, and climbing, I don't know how—I could not do it again—to the opening, two feet square, at the top of my cell, I clutched hold of the cross-bars of iron that guarded it, and wrenched at them with the fury of a savage beast. As it happened, the walls were rotten and decayed, the iron yielded; I dragged it from its hold, and thrusting myself through the aperture, fell, I cannot tell how many feet, alighting in a sodden, slimy, horrible ditch."

"But I did not care—I was free! Fortunately, too, for me, I had my passport, and a bank-note which I had concealed on leaving England, in the waistband of my trousers, and without losing an instant, I made my way back to England."

"And the registers?" asked both Plunkett and Meredith, in a breath.

"Are destroyed."

"What! Utterly?" demanded the lawyer.

"Not a particle remaining!"

Meredith looked at the speaker aghast.

"Are you quite sure—are you certain of this?" he asked.

"Yes. My jailer was explicit on that point."

Kingston Meredith clasped his hands and raised his eyes, with an expression of utter despair.

"There goes the earldom, then!" he said.

And in his heart he thought how in that conflagration, there went also his only hope of ever calling Blanche his own.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

RETURNS TO THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT.

Where is the one who hath not had
Some anguish-trial long gone by,
Steeled spectral-like, all dark and sad,
On busy thought, till the full eye
And aching heart betrayed too well
The past still held untiringly?

ELIZA COOK.

LET us return to the hot, crowded, unsavoury court in which the examination of Mark Allardyce, on the charge of having unlawfully murdered Daniel Kingston, is being carried on.

Let us look again at the bold, confident face of the prisoner, as he stands at the bar so carefully and smartly attired, even to a rose-bud in his button-hole, and carrying our eye across to where the light is ob-

scure, and a space is railled off for ladies, let us take one more look at Flora Angerstein, as she watches, with burning anxiety, the appearance of the next witness in the box.

It was Catherine Lattice, of the Redruth Arms, Galescombe, who next appeared.

Flora breathed again. Surely, she felt, that woman could know nothing of moment. A low, ignorant, gossiping person—if they were going to rest the conviction of Mark on such witnesses as that, he was, she was certain, safe enough.

Rosy, comely, blue-eyed as of old, Catherine Lattice, stepped into the witness-box. She had not much to state; but what she did was corroborative. She described Mark's frequent presence at the Redruth Arms, and specified the night when he came there, accompanied by Emmy Kingston. They admitted that they had come from the lock-up together.

"In what form was the admission made?" asked the prisoner's lawyer, Mr. Tullett.

"Well, sir," was the answer; "I says to the poor dear child, 'How is your dear father to-night?' and before the words was out of my mouth the prisoner makes answer, 'Better,' he says; 'we've just come from the lock-up,' he says, 'he'll do all right.' The poor child shook her head—but she didn't deny that they'd come from the lock-up."

"Is there any question," interposed the magistrate, "as to the prisoner having been to the cell occupied by the deceased?"

"Yes!" said Tullett; "we question if he was ever in the place, then, or at any other time."

"And well!" said Jangle, "care nothing whether he was or was not. It is not our case to show that he was."

"But you charge the prisoner with having administered poison—is not that so?"

"Certainly."

"And about the time, I suppose, to which the witness alludes?"

"Yes. On that night."

"Surely, then, it must be a point in your case to show that the prisoner had access to, and was brought in contact with, the deceased?"

"No," replied Jangle, with a cunning smile, "we do not propose to establish that point."

"We shall be told that the man was poisoned by telegraph, next!" sneered Tullett, who had great faith in the virtue of a laugh in court.

The magistrate, impatient to get at the facts of the case, interrupted the laugh by a plain, straightforward question.

"Is there, or is there not, evidence that the prisoner was ever in the lock-up?" he demanded; "because if so, this appears to be the proper time to take it."

"The gaoler is present," replied Mr. Jangle; "but I hardly know to what length his evidence goes."

"I should like to hear him," said his worship.

Thereupon, Mrs. Lattice was told to step down; and in her place Constable Tongs presented himself. Flom, crouching in her dark corner, surveyed him with eyes that burned, like living coals; she strove to gather from his face his power to injure Mark, and failing in that, listened, with parted lips and suspended breath, to what he had to tell.

Tongs, in answer to the question put to him, detailed what happened on the night to which Mrs. Lattice had alluded. He stated that on leaving the cell with his prisoner's child, she stood for a moment talking to him. She, in fact, asked him to permit her to send her father something nice and warm, as the cell in the lock-up was a dreadfully cold place. He didn't like to refuse, and was telling her that she might do it when, happening to look round, he saw Mark Allardyce crouching up against the wall, as if he didn't care to be seen.

"Was he trying to conceal himself?" asked Jangle.

"I should say he was. I should say he was watching his opportunity to slip into the cell. That was my first notion at the time."

"Thank you," said old Tullett, starting up. "We do not care about your notions, first or second: state the facts, please."

"At all events," said Jangle, "it is a fact that he was there, and that he could have overheard what passed between you and the young woman?"

"He must have done, sir."

Tongs added a statement of what passed, on his finding Captain Allardyce there, ending in the captain and Emmy Kingston starting off together for the Redruth Arms.

"Then, in fact," said Tullett, cross-examining him, "the prisoner did not get into the cell in which your prisoner was confined?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Could he possibly have done so without your knowledge?"

"I should say not."

"Did you ever know him at the lock-up after that?"

"Yes—several times."

"Alone?"

"Always. He used to come and talk me over, so smooth and simple-like, and then go to the prisoner and pity him, and console with him, and make-believe to be sorry that he was ill. But he didn't show much sorrow for him when he died, for he picked a quarrel with Mr. Meredith in the cell, and well-nigh trampled his body under foot. But that's neither here nor there. Only Mr. Meredith told him he'd murdered the old man, and that was what riled him, and they fought over it."

"Then," said the magistrate, trying to pick out the material facts from the general statement, "on this particular night he did not see your prisoner, but after that he saw him frequently, and alone?"

"Just so."

Tullett exercised a wise discretion in not cross-examining this witness, who thereupon disappeared, and Catherine Lattice resumed her place before the court. She proceeded to state that when Emmy Kingston returned, she gave instructions for a warm soup to be prepared for her father—she was on the landing when she gave the order, but prisoner was so near that he might have heard the order. When Emmy returned to the room, she, Mrs. Lattice, went down and gave instructions as to the dish to be got ready. With her own hands she cut up some slices of meat, put them into a saucepan with cold water, added spice, and gave instructions to her girl, Cicely, to prepare some vegetables, which she named, and add to the contents of the saucepan. When she returned up-stairs, Cicely was out in the scullery, a small slip of a place adjoining the kitchen, obeying these orders. Very soon after the witness re-entered the room in which she had left the young people, the captain left.

"Left the house?" asked Jangle.

"No; not directly."

"Where did he go then?"

"Into the kitchen," replied the witness. "I thought I heard him taking a few steps the wrong way, but I thought he had only mistook the way out, and so I didn't interfere, but when my Cicely—"

She was interrupted at this point, and only added that the soup was made, was conveyed by Cicely, attended by Emmy Kingston, to the lock-up, and partaken of by the prisoner, Kingston, who immediately became worse.

"Not very complimentary to the Redruth soup," remarked Tullett, trying to raise a laugh.

Cicely Rugg, the servant, was next examined, and her evidence was to this effect:

"I was in the scullery a-doin' of the vegetables," she said, "and a-keepin' my eye on the pot at the same time, when I hears on a sudding, a light foot gratin' on the sand on the kitchen floor. And when I looks up, what do I see but that gentleman yonder"—she pointed to the prisoner—"a-stealin' cat-fashion across the bricks, up to the fire. When he got to it, he whips off the lid of the pot—I see him plain—and he shakes the soup round two or three times. Then he whips on the lid again; and off he goes like a shot."

"Dear me," said Tullett, rising up with a supercilious grin. "You really saw all this, did you?"

"I did."

"You saw this gentleman satisfy himself that the soup ordered for the sick prisoner was being made. Now, wasn't it burning?"

"No."

"Are you sure? Recollect you were out in the scullery. You were engaged with the vegetables. Might there not have been a burning smell in the kitchen, strong enough to induce a good-natured fellow to step from the passage, behind the bar, only a yard or two, and just give the pot a stir?"

Cicely grinned.

"Her warn't no more a-burnin' than you're a-burnin'," was her reply.

"Nor boiling over?"

"Bilin'! Why missus had any jest put her on!"

"And now as to the gentleman—are you certain it was the prisoner?"

"Sertain, sure."

"You were not at all confused to see him in your kitchen, stirring your soup, I suppose?"

"Yes, I were."

"But you didn't call out?"

"No. He was gone afore you could cry 'Jack Robinson.'"

Amid the tittering of the court, Cicely Rugg was dismissed: but it was evident that her evidence, odd and brief as it was, had produced a strong impression on those who heard it. The link was small; but it directly connected the prisoner with the soup, after partaking of which Daniel Kingston sickened, and died.

Flora saw this, and felt heart-sick at the impression produced. If these smaller fry of witnesses could do so much against the man she loved, what might not have been the case with those more important persons whom she had manoeuvred to keep out of the way, had they been allowed to present themselves in court? Even as these thoughts occupied her distracted

mind she looked up, and to her dismay saw that the face which next confronted the prisoner from the box, in which evidence was given, was—Kingston Meredith.

Was it possible! Had the specious arguments with which she had primed Frank Hildred failed so utterly? Was it possible that after all his display of devotion to the Lady Blanche he had allowed duty to get the mastery over expediency, and was he prepared to sacrifice his chances with the St. Omers, by giving evidence that might condemn one of the family to a felon's death?

She could hardly credit this. Yet there he stood, the Bible in his hand, taking the oath administered, to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as he trusted in God to be his helper!

Kingston Meredith was, he could scarcely help being, deeply affected at the position in which he stood; but he had nerved himself to give his testimony, come what might of it; believing that, in so doing, he simply fulfilled his obligations to Daniel Kingston and his dead child.

In few and simple words he described how he had met the deceased, and by what chance it was that he was frequently near him, and was by his side in his dying hour. He corroborated the statement that Mark had access to the prisoner's cell. He then stated the important fact that, with his dying words, Daniel Kingston had stated that he had been poisoned, and died by foul means. Meredith's conviction that Mark was the person who had been guilty of this treachery was so strong that he had not hesitated to charge him with the murder to his face. This had made him angry, and he had tried to resent it by the use of a knife; but he had never taken steps to make him prove his words.

There was not much in this; the more damaging testimony given by Meredith was, as to the part Mark had taken in persecuting Kingston and his daughter, and the light he was able to throw on the motives which might have prompted such a course as that attributed to him.

Angry as Flora Angerstein was with Meredith for giving any testimony whatever, she could but admit that he had made his statement and borne his cross-examination, in a quiet and forbearing tone, indulging in no strong feelings, though he must have known how much Mark had stood in his way in the matter of the earl's daughter. His evidence, too, had less in it than she had feared.

As Meredith left the court, there was a dead silence for a few seconds.

It was one of those pauses which often occur in courts of justice, which are such a relief to the unconcerned public, but so full of sickening anxiety to those feverishly interested in the issue of the proceedings.

At length Flora, listening with an intensity which defeated itself, for the air seemed ringing and deafening her ears, detected the sound of a name which Jangle half-whispered into the ears of the usher of the court.

It was Lotty's name which she heard—which a moment after was ringing loudly through the court—which was being mispronounced and altered at every turn, as it went from mouth to mouth, among the hangers-on outside the stifling edifice.

The moments during which that name filled the air were agonizing to Flora.

True, the sense of the precautions she had taken consoled her. "She cannot come! no, no! she cannot come!" she kept repeating to herself. Yet, even as she did so, a terrible dread rose up and overmastered her.

"If anything should have happened to defeat me?" she asked, in an agony of fear.

And even as she did so, her large dark orbs were raised from the ground—she looked across the court, and a sharp, short, irrepressible cry of pain escaped her.

Lotty was in the witness-box.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

CRUSHING EVIDENCE.

All is lost now: yes, for me
Love's sun is set for ever.

La Sonnambula.

THAT Lotty should be standing there, and for the purpose for which she had come, was torture enough to Flora; but that she should have escaped out of her toils, almost maddened the beautiful but vindictive creature.

In the very moment of Flora's awaking to the fact of her defeat, Lotty glanced across the court, and singled out the shrinking, crouching woman, as if by instinct.

Their eyes met.

As they did so, a smile stole over the witness's face, a smile of dark, malignant triumph, a smile which expressed more forcibly than language could have done,

the exultation of a fierce, untamable nature, that could love and hate to the death.

Lotty, having been sworn, briefly described her meeting with Daniel Kingston and his daughter, and her going down to Galescombe. On arriving there, she stated, she found a rumour prevalent that her friend had been poisoned by the Earl of St. Omer. At first she believed that possible, but her faith in Mark was greatly shaken by all she heard, and she set herself to watch him. She was doing so on the night when he stole from the Redruth Arms like a thief—that was her expression—and having examined a pocket-book by the light of the window, darted into the meadow, in which she subsequently found papers which must have belonged to Daniel Kingston. Those papers Emmy Kingston subsequently missed.

The lawyer for the prisoner contended that all this was nothing as against the prisoner.

Lotty next described her visit to the cottage occupied by Steve Broad, and her discovery that he was kept there at Mark's expense, and that every day, after Mark's visits, he grew worse and worse, until the people of the house took her advice, and discontinued giving him the medicines prescribed, from which point the man recovered. During his illness, she said, he had raved always upon one subject—

"We can't have people's ravings," interposed Tullett. "They are not evidence."

"But," said Lotty, "he afterwards stated the facts in clear, coherent language, and in the presence of a witness."

"Was it in the presence of the prisoner?"

"No."

Mr. Tullett submitted that such a statement could not be taken as against his client. Any two persons might, if this sort of thing were permitted, lay their heads together, and swear the life of a third away.

"It would certainly be more desirable to have the fact on the evidence of the witness himself—the man Steven Broad," said the magistrate.

"Yes; but I understand that he is dead, or has disappeared," said Mr. Tullett.

"Neither one nor the other!" cried Lotty.

"What! He lives?"

"Yes."

The prisoner, Mark Allardyce, had up to that period regarded the whole of the proceedings with a calm indifference. His subtle intellect saw plainly enough that the web which it was sought to weave around him was flimsy enough to be broken through. Now he trembled, he turned white in the face, he lurched forward and clutched at the front of the dock, as if to save himself from falling.

Flora saw this.

She understood and shared his agony. Her eyes like his, too, read the face of the witness intently as the next question was submitted.

"Where is he?" asked the magistrate.

"In this court."

Mark fairly gasped for breath. As for Flora she stared with blank incredulity, then a groan escaped her lips as, with clasped hands, she sank back, her face pressed tightly against the cold wall.

There?

The fatal witness there? Oh, there must be some mistake! She must have blundered. She must have pressed the Vampire into her service in vain, and have taken all the pains she had to secure some insignificant witness. So she argued with herself. Then, like a flash of light, came the thought of the third person in the cab, of the precautions taken to secure him, of the outrage upon Joe Leech, at the Galescombe station, which had come to her knowledge but yesterday. No! She could not be mistaken! Some terrible calamity must have occurred to defeat all her plotting, all her deep-laid plans. In spite of her, the dreaded witness was there, and the terrible import of that fact she read in Mark's face as in a book.

"What was this person?" asked Jangle.

"Well," said the witness, "he was a racing-stable groom. His name, as I've always heard it, was Steve Broad. He was in the pay of the prisoner."

"Indeed! Has he a racing stable?"

"No; he employed him for very different work as I've heard. But I know nothing of that. I only know that I've seen them together, at Nat Lee's cottage and afterwards, before the prisoner tried to kill him."

"What do you mean—tried to kill Steve Broad?"

"Yes. He pitched him down the old quarry. I was by, and heard his fall, and but for my nursing he would have been a dead man. I nursed him for months, knowing that the time would come when he must be wanted to speak to what he knows."

Mark Allardyce hardly heard those words. The place seemed swimming round. A cold, clammy dew started out upon his brow, and his hands were like ice as they rested one on the other upon the ledge of the dock.

Flora watched his emotion and her heart bled for him.

The voice of Tullett, as he rose with a preparatory

"hem," and a light, flippant "now then, miss," startled both into attention. But the cross-examination was not to begin just yet. Lotty had a word or two to add. She had forgotten one fact. She begged permission to state it.

"At the coroner's inquest," she said, "a paper was produced. It was sent anonymously, but it created a great sensation. That paper bore the earl's coronet, and the word 'poison' was written on it in what was supposed to be the earl's handwriting."

"Well," asked Jangle, "and was it not in the earl's writing?"

"It was not. It was the prisoner's writing, which so closely resembles that of the earl, that it is difficult in a single word to tell the difference. I had my motives at the time for making it appear to tell against the earl. It was wrong, I know; but I was very angry, and I did it. I saw the prisoner take the paper from his pocket on the morning of Daniel Kingston's death, as he was on his way back to Redruth House. I saw him scatter its contents on the grass, and send the paper floating away in the air. He knew then that the popular suspicion went against the earl. I won't say, for I can't say that he had any motive in strengthening it to save his own neck."

Starting with this fact, Mr. Tullett subjected the witness to a long and searching examination. He extracted from her all that related to her connection with Sandown: her anger at the prospect of his marriage with Lady Blanche, and her consequent animosity against Mark who so strongly favoured it. In his adroit way he tried to laugh her evidence to scorn, as that of a person utterly beyond credence, and whose position was rendered worse by her admitted animosity to Mark and to the St. Omer family generally.

It was the old lawyer's trick and was cleverly done; but it did not blind the court to the importance of the facts to which Lotty had deposed. Nor did it render any one less eager to hear the evidence of the next witness—that terrible Stephen Broad, whose testimony Mark had himself described as that of a man risen from the dead.

There was not a sound to break the dead stillness of the court as Steve Broad was helped into the witness-box.

Poor wretch! He was but the ghost, the wreck of a man. His face was so white and so thin that it seemed transparent. He was bowed double, and the hands with which he tried to help himself into his place were small, white and withered as those of a sick child. Worse than all, the slightest exertion racked him with a cough, which seemed to rend and tear his lungs, while it shook him as a wind seizes and shakes a forest tree. About his shoulders he wore a blanket under which he cowered for warmth.

"You are Stephen Broad?" said Jangle.

"I'm all that's left of him, master," was the hollow reply.

"I see, I see,—you are ill!" remarked the lawyer hurriedly.

"I'm dying—dying. But I'm not dead. No, cap'n, no! You've pretty nigh finished me: but not quite. This is your work; but you haven't done it cleverly. No! You've left enough life in me to be the death of you yet!"

He spoke with a trembling lip, his eyes glaring in their hollow sockets, his thin arm outstretched and trembling as it pointed at the prisoner in the dock, who shrank up within himself, utterly overcome at those words.

"Now," said the lawyer interrupting the witness, "I must trouble you to confine yourself to a statement of facts. What do you know of the prisoner in connection with this charge?"

Thus brought back to the duty he had come there to perform, Steve Broad commenced to give, as well as he was able, a connected and detailed account of the transactions between the prisoner and himself.

He started with the night when Mark had attacked him in the stable-yard, and threatening to denounce him in connection with the poisoning of the Rattler, had induced him to entrap Daniel Kingston into the vaults of the house in which he had so nearly perished. This revelation of a prior attempt on the life of Kingston took every one by surprise. It was a secret even to the lawyers on both sides; but need it be said that it terribly strengthened the case against the prisoner? It showed animosity of long standing, and a determination of purpose carried out with reckless wickedness over a long space of time.

Next came the statement of the facts more immediately connected with the death of Kingston.

"He came to me," said Steve, "when I lay sick at Lee's cottage, and asked me where he could get horse-poison? I told him I'd had enough of that, and I wouldn't tell him. Fact was, I thought he meant to use it on me, for he wanted to doctor me, and I knew that he thought I knew too much for him. At last he let out that it was to poison Daniel Kingston with. He said I'd only done my work badly, that I'd let the

man escape, and mischief had come of it, but that now he was ill, and a very little would put an end to him. He said a few pinches of the stuff dropped into a basin o' soup, as he could readily drop it, would be enough, and that no suspicion could come to him or me, or anybody else."

"And what did you say?"

"I told him I wouldn't have no hand in it, and then he threatened me, and bullied and coaxed, and so got me to admit that I had some o' the stuff left. But I wouldn't give him none. I'd made up my mind to that and I stuck to it."

"Well, what then?"

"Why, I was weak, and I don't know how it was, but I came over faint-like, and didn't know what happened. But when I came to myself he was gone, and the bundle at the foot o' my bed was open, and the little packet with the horse-stuff in it was gone too."

"You're quite sure that it was there before he came in?"

"Quite."

"When had you seen it last?"

"Only that day, when I'd had all the things out o' the handkercher, and tied em up afresh. Soon after that I was took bad with delirium—I didn't know nothing—but when I came round I soon heard that Daniel Kingston was dead, and that they'd found poison in him, and then I knew what had happened. I knew that the horse-poison had been given him."

"Did you ever mention it to the prisoner again?"

"I did."

"When?"

"Why, when I got better, and saw him at the quarry on the Galescombe road. I told him I knew all, and he said I'd no evidence against him; and he threatened to set the earl at me if I didn't leave the place. I said I was going to the earl myself—and I meant it, for I was sick with the way I'd been treated—and when I said I would denounce and expose him, he made no more ado, but he gave me a shove, and sent me falling back into the quarry. It was a mercy, a great mercy, as I wasn't killed on the spot. I must have fell some twenty feet, but the bottom was soft and miry, and that saved me. But I've never been the same man since. No, though Lotty nursed me in the old hut at the quarry, and then I was took to Lee's cottage, and looked after there, I'm a broken man. I haven't a year's life in me. I must go; and when I do I lay my life at Mark Allardye's door."

Many were the questions with which the witness was plied as soon as he had completed this statement; but all had one result. The answers given all went to confirm to the nicest points the accuracy of the statement made.

Of course the prisoner's lawyer tried to show that the man was utterly debased and untrustworthy. He dwelt much upon his early life—upon the breach of faith of which he had been guilty in the matter of the Rattler—upon the part he had taken in the outrage on Redruth House—upon the life he had subsequently led—upon the bare fact of his having poison in his possession—and the incredible story of the attempted murder at the quarry. Who, he asked, could believe that the prisoner at the bar would have been inhuman enough, or even impolitic enough to commit such an act?

The question was an unfortunate one.

"There was them as saw it," said Steve Broad.

"Who were they?" demanded Pullett.

Lotty rose to her feet.

"I was one," she said.

"You?"

"Yes! I had met Steve Broad near the spot only a few minutes before. When he saw the prisoner coming he beckoned me to disappear, and I crouched under the furze-bush that grows by the quarry mouth."

"Indeed! And you expect the court to credit this statement unsupported?"

"No," interrupted Lotty, "not unsupported. Lee's wife was by my side. She heard all and saw all. But for her and me, Steve Broad would have been a dead man."

On this, Lee's wife was called; and she told her tale, corroborating all that had been said, and thus adding to the load which threatened to crush Mark Allardye beneath its weight as beneath an avalanche.

But it mattered little what testimony followed that of Steve Broad. Mark knew, and felt instinctively, that from the moment of his appearance all was over. A deep groan had escaped his lips; his head had sunk upon his breast; he heard, but did not seem to heed, the crushing testimony which the man gave with the utmost difficulty, so completely was he broken down. The evidence did not depress him; the points in his favour, elicited in the cross-examination, did not elate him.

The crisis had come.

He had played with the devil's weapons for years, and now they were avenging themselves upon him.

In his heart he had no more hope of escape than if he had been launched in an open boat upon the rushing stream above the torrent of Niagara.

And Flora, to whom his face was a book, read this dismay, this despair, this utter abandonment of all hope and trust, and gave herself up to tears of anguish and remorse. She could not believe in the reality of what she saw and heard. It was incredible that the measures she had taken could so miserably have failed her in her sorest need!

That was one side of the question.

Then came the other. She must lose Mark! She must give up her dream of happiness in the love of the only man she had ever cared for. She must live to see him condemned to a frightful death—to witness that death, perhaps!

"Oh, no—no," she cried out, startling those about her; "it is too horrible! Too horrible!"

They bore her from the court—half-fainting, half-raving—but as she went, she was conscious of these words being uttered from the bench:

"The prisoner is remanded for a week."

(To be continued.)

WILD FLOWERS

Don't say that they are withered,
And must be thrown away,
That scented garden-flowers
Must fill their place to-day.
'Tis true, their early freshness,
Their brightest hues are past,
Yet surely till to-morrow
Those fading flowers may last.
The blue ones from the river
Are opening yet more blue;
Those pale pink buds seem trying
To open wider too.
The hand that plucked and gave them
Is many miles away,
Then surely till to-morrow
Those fading flowers may stay.

LITTLE NELL.

THEATRE AT SANDRINGHAM.—The Prince of Wales is erecting a private theatre at Sandringham, where plays are to be acted after Christmas by "none but noble actors." Theatricals are becoming quite the rage among the upper ten. A well-known costumeur says that he does more with amateurs than with the regular theatres—"they think nothing of spending a thousand pounds upon a single performance." And some of them much more; but it is not well to mention them.

LUNACY.—The French Government has lately been so alarmed by the medical reports as to the increase of lunacy caused by too many intermarriages of parties previously allied to one another by blood, that it has ordered an additional column to be inserted in the baptismal registers to show whether the parents of a child were, before marriage, connected with one another, and in what degree.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.—The cheapest postage-stamp is the French, at one centime, and the dearest is that for the horse-post of California, which costs 21 francs. The best engraved of all the stamps are those of France, Greece, and particularly that of New Caledonia, which merits the first place. The ugliest are those of Belgium and the English, at one penny. The largest are those of Siberia, and the smallest those of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which bears the head of an ox.

FRENCH PROVIDENCE.—An idea of the careful thought and careful way youth is brought up in, in France, may be gathered from the anecdote from the Théâtre du Palais Royal, where a boy of six; the son of an actress, fell into *bon-bon* cemented gossip with Gil Pérez, who was so pleased with him that he gave him a five-franc piece. "What will you do with it?" said he, at the same time. "Oh, I will buy a man when I grow up." "A man?" "Yes, a substitute if I am drawn as a conscript. I have already 305 francs saved."

THE NEW GHOST.—A very exaggerated description appears in a recent number of the *Athenæum* of a little adaptation of the principle on which Mr. Dirck's "ghost" is produced, devised by some opicians in Regent Street. It is so simple a thing that any schoolboy, knowing the original principle, might devise such a modification; and it is utterly unworthy of the laudatory notice bestowed upon it. Moreover, complaints have been made that the curious were not received with any particular courtesy when applying to Messrs. Carpenter and Westley for a peep.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS.—There are now (Dec. 19) in flower at Acton Green, near London, in the cold London clay, Primroses, Violets, Wild Strawberries, Purple Dead Nettle, Chinese Chrysanthemums, Cydonia japonica, Laurustinus (most beautiful), Arabis

grandiflora, Iberis sempervirens, Garrya elliptica, Juncus nudiflorus, China Roses, Heartsease, Holly-leaved Berberry, Christmas Roses, Aster Amellus, Periwinkles, Hellebore argutifolius, and Daisies. We learn, too, from Mr. Drevitt, of the Denbies, near Dorking, Surrey, that he gathered on December 16, from the open ground, flowers from the following plants, viz., Scarlet Rhododendron, Juncus nudiflorus, Mignonette fresh and good, Picotees, Purple Branching Larkspur, Single Anemones, Wallflowers, Orlis, Double Purple Primroses, Polyanthuses, Purple King and Lord Raglan Verbenas, and Cydonia japonica.

O-DAH-MIN, THE INDIAN GIRL.

"Buck or doe, it whar my shot!" exclaimed Hank Overmyer to his companion, as he brought his rifle to the ground, after firing, and began to load it with the greatest despatch.

Trapping near the head waters of the Loup Fork of the Platte river, Overmyer and his tried friend, Jean Baptiste Le Boutillier, a man of mixed blood—Indian and French—on their return to camp, found themselves unexpectedly, and much to their surprise, without food. A hasty investigation satisfied them that wolves had been the robbers, and not, as they at first supposed, red men; and so, preparing themselves, they set out on a fire-hunt. Difficult as they knew it to be to "shine" the eyes of a deer, in distinction to other animals, they yet had the perfect confidence that long practice ever gives: and if it had been otherwise, hunger would have driven them to it, for a day of unbroken fast, toiling as they had done, admitted of no rest until the cravings of nature were satisfied. But they had wandered long without success, and the darkness preceding dawn was around them before a rifle had been fired.

With the report, Le Boutillier, the Frenchman (as he was commonly called, although in fact a *Bois Brule*, or Burnt Wood), sprang forward with the torch, his ready-drawn knife firmly in his teeth. In a moment after, he was followed by his companion; but before he had gained his side, the voice of the Frenchman rang in accents of terror upon his ears, mingling oaths and sacred terms in strange confusion. The astonished and terrified trapper dropped the torch, and in an instant all was total darkness around them.

"Great Heaven! what is the matter?" exclaimed Overmyer, astonished to see such an experienced man, and one usually so cool amid danger, thus dismayed, undecided, comparatively helpless, and at the same time trying to relight the extinguished torch.

"*Mon Dieu!* A girl, and —"

"A girl!" and the hand of the danger-tried and reckless trapper shook so that he failed to gain a single spark from the heretofore true flint and steel.

At length the resinous flambeau was again ignited, and with much the same feeling that a superstitious man advances when he believes he has seen a ghost, and has nerved himself to ascertain the reality, Overmyer forced himself forward, closely followed by his partner.

Glistening on the dewy leaves, and making strange, weird shadows in the tall tree-tops, the pitch-flaming light shone, and then, as it was lowered, the cause of Le Boutillier's excitement was fully revealed. A young Indian girl lay apparently dead at their very feet.

Placing the torch in a convenient fork of a tree, the white trapper raised her up in his strong arms, and with swift-beating heart began searching for the mark of his bullet.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed, in a voice strangely subdued and filled with thankfulness, for one of his class, as he saw that his shot had not been fatal,—that the lead had not been buried, as he had intended, directly between the eyes.

"She no die?" questioned the other, although much relieved by the tone in which the words had been uttered.

"To camp!" commanded Overmyer in the short stern way of one with whom action was ever more than words; and scarcely waiting for his companion to pilot him with the torch, he set rapidly out.

A short half-hour and they stood upon the bank of Loup Fork; the human burden had been deposited on the bed of skins and blankets that was usually the resting-place of Overmyer; water had been procured, the wound washed and dressed with rude skill, and the Frenchman was on the tramp again in search of game.

Early dawn succeeded the darkness. The "grey-hooded" clouds were gilded by the fire and fretted with the vermilion of a bright, sun-lit morning, and for the first time the watchful eyes of the white man could distinctly see the face of her who had so nearly been sent to the land of spirits.

Young she was. But eighteen summers of flowers and winters of storms had passed over her head. Fairer in complexion than is usual among the nomad tribes, she was also gifted with the strange beauty sometimes, though rarely found among them; for, as a class, few can boast of even an approximation to it. Her long and intensely black hair was woven into massive braids, her eyes curtained by soft drooping lashes, and her tall form clothed in fine skins and daintily-coloured cloth, richly embossed with quill-work. There was no tawny hue of cheek, brow, or bosom, but rather an olive tinge, through which the rich blood of youth was wont to flush a ruddy flame. The customary high cheek-bones were but faintly to be traced, and the small, neatly moccasined foot and slender hand revealed the presence of what is usually denominated "blood." Far back, perchance, a purer, whiter race might have been intermingled with that of her Indian parentage, and after long remaining dormant, suddenly shone out in all its original perfectness in the form of this wounded child of the wilderness.

All these things Overmyer saw as he knelt near the insensible form changing the cool dressing of plantain leaves. Still lower he bent to assure himself that a vision of so much beauty, in such a strange place, was not some fanciful delusion of the brain, when the patient suddenly opened her eyes, raised herself up, and looked wildly around. A rapid pressing of the hands upon her forehead, another startled look, and she started from her recumbent posture and gained the door of the rude shantee, as if in the act of flying. If such was her intention, it was thwarted by the sudden appearance of Le Boutillier, who at the moment was entering, laden with small game.

"Sit down. We are friends," he said, addressing her in the language most used by him, the French.

The girl looked eagerly at him, but shook her head as one that did not understand.

"Omawhaw?" he asked.

"Kaw Omawhaw, Pawnee!" was the proud reply. "Pawnee!" he repeated in the language of that tribe, for he was familiar with most of the dialects used on the frontier.

"Pawnee!" reiterated Overmyer in astonishment, for he, also, perfectly understood and could talk the "lingo," as he called it, of those Arabs of the plains. "Pawnee!" And then changing into French, he continued to his companion: "What in the name of thunder could have brought a gal way out here, and alone?"

But he stifled his curiosity for the time, soothed the fears of the girl, and induced her to be seated and eat of the meal the Frenchman soon prepared. Then he questioned her as to the reason of her being so far from her tribe, first, however, explaining the cause of her being wounded.

"O-dah-min wandered far with her father and the braves of the tribe. They had gone on a great hunt. So they told her, and she did not believe that their tongues were forked. But the game was hidden from them. They came upon an encampment of the Crows. As if the streams of the Black Hills had been turned by the evil spirit into blood, and bursting from their rocky banks had swept over the prairie, so red was it. The heart of O-dah-min grew faint. She was sick of blood, and turned her horse towards the smoke of wigwams of her tribe.

"And you dared to venture thus alone, Strawberry?" asked the white trapper, at once rendering her name into its English signification.

"The daughter of the red man loves and trusts in the Great Manitou."

"Waal, you started home?"

"The war-hoop was ringing in her ears, her eyes were blinded by the crimson life-blood, and she could not see. Whither she wandered she knew not, but the black blanket of night was spread over the fiery eye of day. Both she and her horse were tired and hungry. The trail had been long."

"Yes, and a hard one. I rode it once when thar whar ever so many of the Crows on my trail yelping after me, and I tell yer I haven't forgotten it yet. But go on with your story, Strawberry."

"O-dah-min could find no food or water, for the woods were thick, and the moon and stars hid. She fastened her horse to a tree and crept up high among its branches."

"Waal, I wouldn't have liked that much, hunter and man, and well-armed as I am, for the wolves thar about are jest as thick as bees in swarmin' time."

"They came howling on my trail."

"I knew it! By thunder, I knew it would be so! Now, if I only had been thar. I and the Frenchman—but go on."

"I heard their pattering feet among the dry leaves; I saw their eyes of fire. Then there was a rush as of a mighty tempest when the great Kabibonok-ka sweeps from its home of ice in the winter-time, a yell of terror and agony, a crunching of bones, a tearing of flesh, a spurting of hot blood, even high up into the face of O-dah-min, and then —"

"Great Heaven! what then?" interrupted the excited white trapper.

"Then the Good Manitou sent an angel to steal away the senses of the Indian girl, and she wandered in the land of dreams, until the sun was higher than the tall trees on the mountain-tops."

"I've been through many a har-raisin' escape myself, and know jest how it feels; but how you, a gal, could have stood that and lived through is more than I can well understand. But you did git clar of them terrible wolves!"

"O-dah-min thanked the Great Spirit first, then she fled from the spot. Soon she found food and water. All that day she travelled. Night came, but she dared not rest. She was groping her way through a leafy fastness; she saw a great light. Then came a flash, and then —"

"It whar when I shot, not knowing the difference between the eyes of a human and those of a deer. And yet I've heard many an old hunter say that no one could tell to a sartinity in the night-time, because they looked so much alike."

"The girl is safe now," interrupted Le Boutillier, speaking for the first time, "and she must be getting on the home-trail, for if the Pawnees catch her here in our company —"

"By thunder! I had not thought of that. Ef they do, it will be no small chance for our scalps, that's the fact. But she can't and shan't go alone, that's flat."

When speaking to each other, the trappers always used the French language, so the Indian did not understand them. But, as if by intuition, she started to her feet, murmured thanks, and at once struck into the forest with her face turned towards the rising sun.

"Thar she goes, jest like a young buffalo that has broken out of a corral. Take care of yer traps and follow me," and without another word Overmyer seized his rifle and darted along the trail in pursuit.

Very soon he was by her side, but all his offers of attendance were refused.

"The pale-face must not go," was the constant answer. "If the warriors of the Pawnees found him by the side of O-dah-min, they would tear his heart from his body."

"Waal, it might be so, Strawberry, but I don't believe it, arter what I've done for you."

"The pale-face knows not the red man. His heart is hard as the flint-rock from which the fire gushes when struck."

"Now look here, gal," and the trapper turned his face full towards her, flushed with the pride of an honest determination, "it haint many good deeds I've done in my life, and I'm determined to do one now, onyhow. Whether I live or am cut inter inter pieces, makes little matter, and so I'm goin' to see yer safe home, that's thar long and thar short of it. I'd be ashamed to look even a wolf in thar face agin ef I let a young gal like you go travellin' through this howlin' wilderness alone. Why, Strawberry, even you'd call me a coward in yer heart."

Her strange beauty and self-possessed manner, the swaying gracefulness of her form, and the glorious freedom of her step, the flashing of the full, black eye, the softly-tuned voice, the winning smile playing at times round the full, ripe lips, had struck a chord in the breast of that strong man that had never been sounded before, and it vibrated tremulously. From that moment he would have willingly given his life to ensure her safety; and this feeling grew more strongly upon him from the fact that he, though innocently, had nearly been her murderer.

No reply came from the lips of O-dah-min to his earnest words. She felt that they would be useless—that his stern resolve and sacrifice of self to almost certain death would never be broken. But such vows of faithfulness to a friend were not as uncommon among the nomadic red men as with the pleasure and gold-seeking ones we call civilized, and who are faithful to themselves.

Together through the day they travelled, he shooting the necessary game, and she picking berries and cooking the meals. Night found them far on their way, but they could not reach the wigwams of the Pawnees, and the dark shadows closed around them when in a little rocky canon that cut the bluffs on a small tributary of Loupe Fork, and just before it emptied itself into the main river.

With these primitive children of woodland and prairie, whose wants were few, and to whom luxury was unknown even in name, a night camp was an easy matter. A slight shelter formed of boughs and bark, a fire, a blanket to cover them, was all. By the direction of the trapper the Indian girl retreated beneath the rude shed, while he threw himself upon the hard earth with his feet to the embers, and well, indeed, would it have been had these positions remained unchanged.

But with midnight the trapper was aroused by the

sharp snapping of dry branches. Everything around was hushed as if in the realms of the grave, save the low rustle of the foliage and the music of the waters as they kissed the shore—the sound so well expressed by the "mud-way-aush-ka" of the red man.

Satisfied that he had been mistaken, or that the noise he had heard was occasioned by the swift flight of some bird of night, the trapper piled dry branches upon the fire until the flames shot up merrily, lighting all around as if the glare of the noonday had been suddenly shot upon it. Another look, and then he stooped and entered the little house of boughs.

Calmly as an infant the Indian girl was sleeping. No mark of care or pain was exhibited upon her features, but such a soft half-smile was toying with the lips as our little loved ones wear when we deem the angels are whispering to them.

"Strawberry," whispered the trapper, kneeling by her side and gently taking hold of the arm she had thrown backward and rested her head upon, for with the habitual caution of our forest-trained he yet was suspicious.

Aroused thus suddenly, the girl sprang to her feet in a half-dream, and would have rushed away; but the strong arms of the trapper detained her. Wreathing them around her even as a lover would have clasped a worshipped one to his heart, he held her and strove to make her understand his fears.

"Strawberry, I heard a voice just now, and —"

A ringing war-whoop cut the sentence in twain. A score of brawny, painted warriors appeared suddenly on all sides, and he was seen by every eye clasping a daughter of their tribe to his heart, alone, and in the wilderness. God help the brave man and innocent girl, for their own actions will condemn them more than the words of many innocent witnesses!

Quick as thought, almost, the twain were dragged asunder—he bound to a tree, and she cast as a guilty thing upon the floor of the little shelter.

"Look here!" shouted Overmyer, suddenly addressing the group of savages that were calmly seated around the well-replenished fire, smoking, and "nursing their wrath to keep it warm," until the hour of sunrise.

"Look here, and jest listen to what I say. You think the gal there, Strawberry, guilty of some crime, don't yer? But its jest as false as can be. She whar tryin' to git home, havin' lost her horse by the wolves, and I whar guidin' her and tryin' to have her go safe. That's all about it."

An emphatic grunt of unbelief was the only response, but the trapper saw the face of the girl raised, and fancied it wore an expression of thanks. But the action was so quick he could not be certain.

"Don't be fools enough to think I'm tryin' to save my own life, for I haint. Jest you fire away with yer hatchets and knives, and pitch-splinters, and hot coats! Try me anyhow yer fancy likes, but don't hurt a gal that is as innocent as a babe unborn."

Another grunt, one more angrily uttered than the last, and then the chief arose, drew his blanket around him proudly, and stepping to the side of the prisoner, replied:

"The pale-face speaks not well. When the shadows are falling from the wings of the ill-omened bird of death; the tongue should not be poisoned with lies like that of the snake with many rattles, but should travel the straight trail of truth."

"Yer think I lie, do yer? Waal, I couldn't rightly expect anything better from yer, but as God is my judge, I have told the truth."

"God—God," repeated the Indian, as well as he could, for the trapper had inadvertently used the term while conversing in the Pawnee language.

"Yes, the Great Spirit—*Gitché Manitou*—they all mean the same thing. As He knows all, as He will judge me when I am dead, the gal, Strawberry, is free from all sin, so far as I know."

Perchance the memories of childhood, and the desperate situation in which he was placed, made his voice peculiarly solemn and impressive. Or, more likely still, that overruling Power he had called upon directed them as if fire-tipped arrows to the hearts of the listeners, for withdrawing from his side, the chief again sought the circle, and a long but inaudible discussion ensued. Then there was a lengthened silence, and then the words of decision and doom fell from the lips of the chief.

"The pale-face will die," said the chief of the tribe, "but the girl shall live to return to her tribe. He tempted her, and the Great Manitou cries aloud for his blood. She, if found guilty, will be punished in the hereafter. Let the pale-face sing his death-song, and —"

A wild scream as of one in pain startled all, and before any had time to seek a solution, the Indian girl, O-dah-min, flung herself into the circle of warriors! Such an unlooked-for occurrence, and one so entirely contrary to, and an outrage upon the laws of the tribe, operated upon that land of stoical warriors much after the manner a thunderbolt bursting in their midst would have done. They stood aghast, speech-

less, robbed for the moment of the power of action.

"Let the chiefs of the Pawnees hearken," she said with a voice trembling with the excess of emotion. "If they kill the pale-face, let O-dah-min die also! He is as free from sin as she. In thought, word, or deed, neither have wronged the laws of the red man, or the spirit mandates of the Great Manitou. He but guided her through the wilderness to the wigwams of her people. Look! she dare carry the mystic emblems through the line of the armed warriors to the sacred council lodge, and none will raise a hand against her. Let them put her to the test."

Bold words, these, for not one in a thousand of the girls of the tribe but would have perished in such an ordeal, and for a moment they wavered. But it was only for a moment. A warrior who had remained somewhat apart from the rest, with his blanket drawn over his head so as to completely disguise both face and form, suddenly threw aside his covering, and advancing laid his hand on the arm of the girl. A ruthless, treacherous, and ambition-swayed savage was he, and one that would scruple at no means, no matter how base or inhuman, to arrive at the goal of his aspirations—the great chief and ruler of the tribe.

"Father!" burst from the lips of the girl.

"Shoon-ka-sha!" (white dog) muttered the brave.

"Father," cried O-dah-min, "you, at least, will believe me free of guilt—believe that no stain rests upon your name through me," and she would have embraced him affectionately had he not held her away and sternly commanded her to be silent.

"Brothers," he began, "O-dah-min is the only child of Shoon-ka-sha. Her mother, the Swaying Willow, has long been in the happy hunting-grounds of the Spirit Land. The daughter of the red man was dear to his heart as is the cool rain to the parched flower in the hot summer moon. He loved her as the dove doth its little ones. Like the fierce bear of the mountains would he have battled for her. But now he tears her from his father, and tramples her in the dust?"

"Father—father!" interrupted the girl, struggling to be free.

"If you're a 'white dog,' you've got a most black heart," growled the pinioned trapper.

"Brothers," continued the savage, without heeding the interruption, "when she gave herself to a pale-face—an enemy—when she slept in his arms, and —"

"Father!"

"The warriors all saw her pressed to his bosom. They saw her unresisting form woven in his arms. His hot breath was upon her cheek, as the poisoned kiss of guilt had been upon her lips!"

"Father!"

"Fiend!" shouted the trapper, fast losing all command of his temper.

"When the council of chiefs would have saved her, she forgot their laws and the teachings of her youth—she gloried in her shame, and dared to plead for his base life. Let her die!" and he flung her scornfully from him.

"Death!" repeated the warriors.

"As they were found, so shall they die," continued the more than inhuman parent.

"So we will!" came back from the lips of the girl, whose outraged feelings now spurned all control, and turning, they saw one arm around the form of the trapper, while the other held a knife threateningly aloft.

"Separate them!" thundered the would-be chieftain.

"Let him who courts death come!" was hissed back between the clenched teeth of the girl.

Madly, wildly she struck at those who advanced, but the keen steel was shivered to the very handle by a blow from a tomahawk, and in a moment she was overpowered, carried away, and bound beyond the possibility of escape.

At a signal from Shoon-ka-sha, four stalwart warriors lifted either form and bore them up the little canon for some distance. Others, in the advance, had found the entrance to a cavern in the rocks. Into this they were dragged, then secured by strong thongs of pliant deer-skin on opposite sides, and so as to be completely out of each other's reach, and then left to die the long, fearful, lingering death of starvation!

Death at any time is fearful, but how much less the contemplation of a speedy one amid the shock and whirlwind, the lightning glare and the thunder-anthem of battle, than the slow approach of the dread angel, when you can hear the dull and nearing clanking of the skeleton footsteps, and feel its way, as, snail-like in movement, but certain as fate, it creeps along the avenues of life, drying them up from the extremities, inch by inch and vein by vein, until at last it reaches the fountain-head—the heart.

But the remorseless savages neither thought of nor cared for these things. Like the carrion buzzard, they glutted themselves upon blood and torture, and

with the very quintessence of evil passion, they, while they rolled huge stones against the narrow doorway, so placed them as to admit sufficient light for the prisoners to watch each other's long-protracted and terrible agony.

"Strawberry," said the trapper, when he had had sufficient time to recover from the first shock, "do yer know anything of this den that they have thrown us into?"

"There is a tradition among the red men that it was once the home of a great Wa-be-no (evil spirit), and the Medicine tells the red man that he buried his treasures here, and that he left a great snake, Ken-a-buk, the red man calls it, to keep guard over them."

"But, Strawberry," and the voice of the trapper grew solemn, for the anticipation of the poisonous reptile in the present was more startling to him than even death in the future, "can't yer git yer hands loose? It won't do for us to die here like wolves in a trap."

"What the red man's hand ties, the keenest knife can alone unfasten."

"And I can't break mine. I've tried until the thongs have cut into my flesh like knives." And then, as a new thought struck him, he continued: "I wonder what can have become of my old partner, the Frenchman? Ef he only knowed that we whar here, he'd find some way to dig us out."

"If the red men found him, his scalp is now drying in their wigwams, and his hair fringing their leggings."

"Yes, I reckon it must have been so, for ef he had been alive, he would never have left my trail any more than a wolf would have left that of a bleeding doe. Yes, poor feller! he must have gone to his long home. Now, Strawberry, you jest roll over this way as far as ever you can. I'll do ther same, and perhaps I can git my teeth in reach of yer fastenings. Ef I do so, and do not chew them in two in less than a minute, I'll be content to go hungry the rest of my natural life."

Both exerted themselves to the utmost. But in vain they struggled. The tough skin thongs, when stretched to the last degree, still held them many feet apart.

"It can't be done," said the trapper, in a voice of despair. "Thier buck's hide was an old one, and forty wild horses couldn't make it give another inch."

"Does the pale-face fear to die?" questioned the girl.

"Waal, I don't know as I do, onymore than another man, fur I haven't bin overly wicked; but to be sent out of ther world, inch by inch, haint' one of ther pleasantest things to think on, I can tell yer."

As if both were busy with their own thoughts, there was an awful stillness in that funeral cavern for hours.

The silence was broken first by the trapper, who had not been trained so well in that respect as the Indian girl, and consequently had not his tongue under such perfect control.

"Strawberry, hark, listen!" he whispered, rather than uttered, but it was a blood-curdling whisper that pierced not alone the ear, but the heart. "Strawberry, do you ear nothing? No sound, no rustle?"

She had heard it long before he did, for her hearing was not only far more acute, but ever wakeful. Yes, she heard it, and knew too well what it foreboded. But the same kindness that had restrained her from speaking of it, now also prompted her to keep him still ignorant, if possible, of the great fear that had taken entire possession of her.

"Strawberry," in the same thrilling, curdling whisper, "I'm certain I heard something. Listen!"

"I hear the rustle of the tree-tops, the Minne-wa—pleasant song of the wind among the branches."

"That is not it."

"The murmur of waters steal up from the valley."

"No, not that. By heaven it is —!"

"Let the pale-face lie still as death," came with startling distinctness from the lips of the girl.

"Then, I am right. It is —!"

"Ken-a-buk!"

"The great snake! And we are tied hand and foot! Now may Heaven be kind to us, Strawberry!"

"Hist!"

A low rustle, as when the wind gently disturbs the dead leaves in autumn, first fell upon their sensitively alive ears. Then it came nearer, and was followed by the whirring, warning rattle, then the angry hiss, telling that the reptile was fully aroused, and then, even as they lay turned towards each other, they could see the upreared head, the madly-oscillating tongue, the gaping jaws, and the fire-flashing eyes.

From side to side its horrid head was turned, as if unknowing which to strike, and then, after a few minutes of watchfulness, during which even the breathing of the tortured ones was suspended, and a whole life of agony condensed, the clammy, shining

folds were unwrapped, curve by curve, and stretching its undulating form to its utmost length, it began to move slowly forward. Thank Heaven! they were safe from such a death of horror—a death that makes the firmest flesh creep, and the very soul shudder even when imaged forth in the phantasmagoric visions of a distorted dream.

Safe? No! A sigh of relief, a sudden escaping of the pent-up feelings, burst involuntarily from the heart of the trapper. Quicker almost than thought, the coil was resumed, and the whirring noise of the rattles filled the rocky vault. Now it was sure of its prey; now it was not to be fooled. Whiz! Like a watch-spring suddenly freed, the entire coil sprang forward with the jaws just missing the blanched face of the trapper. A single inch more, and the fangs would have been buried deeply in him, the green, festering poison run riot through the hot blood, face, neck, body, and limbs been chequered with livid, repulsive blotches, the tongue become blackened, the eyes forced from their sockets, and the gangrened heart burst with its swift putrefaction.

Another forming of the propelling coil, another time of watching, and then once more it crept away, just touching with its slimy folds the hands of the Indian girl. Even as they lay there they saw its glistening skin flash like scales of fire as it slowly glided through the little chinks in the rocks that guarded the door. Both knew that they were safe from this monster rattlesnake of the mountains, this terror alike of man and beast, and a thrill of joy shot like sunshine through their souls. But their woodcraft soon checked such thoughts. When one of these reptiles was found (in such a locality) there also were usually hundreds, for it was their home—their noisome den. Safe they were, indeed, for a time, at least from this one; but would not others follow, seeking light and prey? Were they not lying on the very track they would travel, and could they hope to escape unstung?

"Strawberry," said Overmyer, first breaking the silence as was his wont, though in a strangely hollow voice, "Strawberry, thank Heaven, we are safe!"

"The pale face speaks not well. For the sake of saving the poor Indian girl from the dangers of the forest, he has lost his own life."

"Wall, ef I have, it's about the first good cause I ever risked it in. Ef Heaven has decreed that Hank Overmyer has set his last trap and fired his last shot, why, death will come as easy here as anywhere, I s'pose."

Night was fast coming on. Less and less grew the little rays that struggled through the crevices—fainter and fainter they became, and then all was inky blackness. Doomed to die, without the power of motion—without even the sad comfort of looking into each other's faces, threatened by the death-dealing snakes—they must pass the night, and watch the lingering minutes until another day of misery should dawn upon them—if, indeed, their wretched lives were spared so long.

For a time they conversed in guarded tones, each striving to cheer the other—telling of the past, hoping against hope for the present, and praying for the future. But at length even the sound of their own voices became oppressive, and exhausted nature asserted its right to repose.

Sleep came upon them, heavy and not easily broken. Worn out both in body and mind, they knew nothing that was passing around them—nothing of bonds—nothing of savage-planned death or hissing snake, through the long, dark hours. Blood-seeking wolves howled even at the very entrance, and the little guard of Indians, left by the tribes, rattled down and replaced one of the stones, to assure themselves of their safety—but the prisoners knew it not. In that mystic land that lies mid-way between life and death—that semi-mesmeric state we call sleep—were they, unconscious to all, until fire-tipped arrows were shot from the golden quiver of heaven, piercing even the remotest recesses of their rock-guarded den—their living prison, and their future tomb.

And so another and yet another day passed.

"Strawberry," huskily breathed the trapper, as he awoke from unrefreshing slumber, filled with dreams of cool, sparkling springs, and tables loaded with the choicest cheer, "are you still living?"

It required a great effort to utter even these words, for the parched throat, the swollen tongue, and the cracked lips, almost refused to articulate the brain-formed ideas.

"Yes, but—"

"Death will soon come."

"I know it. I feel it."

"Oh! that I had a single drop of water—a single mouthful of food!"

Far too weak to continue the conversation, it was dropped, to be resumed again some hours later.

But every moment was bringing them nearer to

the fatal precipice that overlooks the dark valley of the hereafter. Every throb of the heart was less strong, and every flutter of the pulse fainter.

Not long can human nature endure such suffering, though sinewed with iron and nerved with steel.

"Strawberry!"

It was the very ghost of a whisper—the mockery of a sound, that affrighted the dreadful silence.

"Strawberry! May Heaven have mercy upon me—she's dead!"

"Pale-face," came whispered back, as if with the last breath that preceded dissolution, farewell!

"Strawberry—good-bye! I am—dy—"

"Hist!"

Was it the tongue of the serpent that uttered the sharp sound? Both thought so, and even with the throes of dissolution upon them, were startled, for that inborn fear and hatred to the reptile lingered, and was the master, for a moment at least, over death itself.

"Hist!"

And this time a low, plaintive whistle, not unlike the call of a robin to its mate, followed the sound.

And now their already acute hearing (for in the moment that precedes death are not the senses gifted, as it were, with supernatural power—do they not seem to free themselves from their earthly trammels, and put on the attributes of angels?) was strained to the utmost, waiting for a repetition.

"Hist!"

And the sharp, serpent-like sound ended in a perfect imitation of the sonorous croaking of a huge frog.

"By Heaven, it is the call of the Frenchman, my old partner! He ain't dead—he's on our trail. Don't give up yet, Strawberry!"

"Quickly as the swallow flies must relief come, or the moccasin of her the pale-face calls 'Strawberry' will never again leave its impress on the trail of earth."

"Don't die!"

The words burst from him with all the force and earnestness that he could have exhibited in his most vigorous moments, showing how deeply his heart was interested, his entire nature wrapped up in the matter.

"Pale face, I go to the land of spirits. May the Great Manitou save and keep you."

"Heaven, she is dead!"

"Hist!"

The word was followed by a ringing sound as if a piece of steel had fallen on the rock floor of the cave.

Overmyer turned in the direction whence it had proceeded, and his heart leaped wildly within him as he saw a long knife lying within his reach, if indeed his hands had been free. With an almost expiring effort he struggled to burst his bonds. Firm as iron they still held him, but yet he was able to clutch the glittering weapon in his teeth.

Now he had the means of freedom, but how, with both hands and feet tied, could he use it? Before giving the matter a single thought, his noble nature turned again to his companion in misery.

"Strawberry, girl! I've got a knife now, and—Merciful Heaven! can she be dead? Strawberry! Strawberry!"

A low, gurgling sound, as of one in the last death-agony, startled the echoes of the cavern, and then all was still again. If this was not the triumph note of death, what could it be?

Desperate now, the trapper turned and strove with his teeth-held knife to reach the thong that bound him to the side of the prison-house. Effort after effort was made in vain, but at length he accomplished his object, and a mighty heartbound almost lifted him up as the fastening parted beneath the keen-edged steel. Now he was free to roll to the side of her for whom he had suffered so much. Regardless of his own pain, he moved inch by inch until his face lay close against that of the Indian girl. He called as loud as he was able her name, but she answered not; he placed his lips to hers, holding his own breath. Slightly they were parted, and a faint fluttering, a very dying zephyr of life, told him that she still lived.

Now to save her, was the generous, manly thought of the trapper. But how? One cut from the sharp knife would loosen his hands, and then all would be easy. Ah! that single stroke of the knife was more difficult for one situated as he was than the taking of an embattled tower by a troop of unarmed men. But it must be done! The life of both hung upon the simple act. Turn and strive as he would, he was yet baffled. And now the knife fell from his teeth, and was lost among the roughness of the floor. An eager but rapid search failed to find it. The plummet of utter despair sank deep into his soul. He crawled to the side of the Indian girl, and laid his head upon her breast to die.

"Hist!"

The sound again nerved him, and he dragged himself towards the rear of the cavern, and for the first time discovered a little opening in the roof, that let in both light and air. He looked upwards, and saw descending a small birchen pouch, or "mook," as the red man terms it. What could it contain but food? Slowly it was lowered to the floor, and the string disengaged by a dexterous movement. He reached it, and attempted to tear it open with his teeth. He missed his hold, and fell sideways with a groan. But the heart-wrung sound was changed in an instant to one of exquisite joy. His very lips had fallen into a little pool of water—a drop-worn cup in the dirty floor. Eagerly and long he quaffed of the life-giving tide, and then his very brain fired with the thought of taking some to the dying girl. But again the startling question came—how? Means he had none—none that any mind could have conceived of, save the one he adopted.

Another draught of the sparkling rock-born and filtered fluid, and he prepared himself to return to the dying girl. Slowly, and with great difficulty, he turned, and dragged himself along. A few feet only accomplished, and something sharp scratched his leg. Was it the sting of the monster-serpent left by the great Indian magician to guard his treasure, or the keen edge of some ragged rock? See he must, and did. In the uncertain half-light he found again his lost knife sticking, blade up, in a deep crevice. With his teeth he tried to draw it out, but all his efforts only sunk it deeper, until it became pressed so hard in the narrow jaws of the rock, that it was immovable. Firm, as if held in a vice, it stood, point upwards, and a low laugh, for the first time, escaped from the lips of the trapper. But, oh! what a horrid mockery of the joyous outbursting of the pleasure-awayed soul it was!

An instant only, and the thoughts that held his hands were severed. True, in rubbing them up and down on the keen blade, was inflicted several wounds, but what cared he? Free they were, and though almost useless from long compression, yet he managed to tear up the knife, and remove the fetters from his limbs. Oh, the wild joy that flooded his soul at the first breath of freedom! He strove to raise himself and walk forward, but could not. He reeled like a drunken man, and fell headlong.

Mind, however, is superior to matter, and, creeping on, he cut the thongs, and freed the Indian girl. He placed his hand upon her heart, and found it still beating, but more feeble than that of one newly born. He tried to lift her up, but vainly. Had she been but a feather's weight, his swollen arms would have refused to raise, and his limbs to have supported it. Inch by inch, he was forced to draw her over the ragged floor, until he reached the little pool more valuable to him than any Ponce de Leon ever dreamed of. Forming his hands into a cup, he dashed it into her face, and dropped it gently into the slightly parted lips. There was a gasp—strangling—an intense shiver of the entire frame, and then the throat relaxed and the cool water was swallowed eagerly.

Seeing this, the trapper softly laid her head down, and seizing the little bark packet, severed the covering in an instant. A little flask, and a small quantity of recently cooked venison he found within, both the very jewels of life.

To the lips of the girl he first applied the bottle. It was the fiery contents of the still, and shot with lightning-like rapidity through every vein. Her eyes opened, and she endeavoured to sit up. The smile that was striving to form itself upon the lips of Overmyer was strangled in its birth by the application of the bottle. Carefully setting it aside, he began to feed Strawberry, taking between whiles huge mouthfuls himself, until she at length was enabled to sit up, leaning against the rocks. Both now were on the fair road to recovery, save that they might overtask nature by a too liberal supply of food, and it, rebelling against such usage, should make them pay a severe penalty.

In a low voice they conversed, the man cheerfully assuring her that his faithful friend Le Boutillier was near, and would certainly save them but he thus far had dared to give him no signal for fear of watching savages.

For some days afterwards they remained in their prison-house, supplied, somewhat mysteriously, from the little outlet above with even the luxuries of forest life, and at length a morning of deliverance came to these poor cavern-dwellers.

A sudden tearing down of the rocky barrier at the entrance, a loud shout of joy, and the Frenchman, Le Boutillier rushed in, almost wild with happiness. Good cheer, and that in plenty, he brought with him, and seated beneath a wide-spreading tree, with a flowery bank for a carpet, the songs of birds for music, undertoned by the murmuring waters, the cool breath of heaven fanning their cheeks, and, above all, perfect freedom, they feasted, and listened to his short

story. Short, for he completely ignored himself and his own dangers, privations, and sufferings, in the relation.

He had, he said, followed them as quickly as possible, but soon found that a party of Indians were ahead of him on the trail. He had tracked them cautiously, even after they had been placed in the cave, for then he knew not of it. One night he ventured near their camp fire, and heard some of the guards talking of the matter, and returned at once. With difficulty he found the locality of the cave, but as it was guarded by four savages, he dared not venture to open it. After much search he stumbled upon the little opening, and then gave the signal, "hist!" and threw down the knife. This he followed by food, day after day, until the guards took the homeward trail. Then also he followed for a day and a night until, becoming satisfied that they could not turn back, he hastened to release his friends, stopping only on the way to kill the game he had brought.

And this was all that passed the lips of that brave man! Not one word of the risks he had run—not a single one of what he had endured for their sake!

Years afterwards, there might have been found among the semi-civilized and Christian Indians on the Monomonee river, and in the immediate vicinity of Green Bay, two log-houses of more pretensions than any others in the settlement. They were the homes of white men, trappers, and fur-traders, although the mistress of each might claim direct descent from a long line of Indian chieftains. One man was known far and wide among the red men as Soan-ge-ta-ha, and his wife as O-dah-min; though the whites ever called them Hank Overmyer and Strawberry. The other was called Le Bouthillier, and his spouse, Marie (probably a name given her at the time of her Christian baptism by the priest), for he also had found a helpmate, fully corroborating the adage of his transatlantic brethren, "What would an isolated soul do, even in heaven itself?"

"Frenchman," said Overmyer, on the evening of his return from a visit to the Mississippi, where he had been on a trading excursion, "do you recollect ther father of my wife?"

"Shoon-ka-sha?"

"Yes; the 'white dog' of the Pawnees."

"Sacra! yes."

Even his own Christianity and that of his wife could not, at all times, keep the oath he had used for so many years from slipping from his tongue when sorely vexed.

"Waal, I met one of ther great chiefs of ther tribe on ther big river, and he told me he whar dead."

"Bon—bon!"

"And what yer will think ther best of it is, that he whar tortured, even worse than we whar, too, if such a thing is possible, that by his own tribe, too, for something he had done. So it seems he whar found out at last."

"Tell me."

"Not now, for it is a long story; and, besides, I haven't seen ther Strawberry and ther youngsters yet."

"You will not tell her that?"

"Not how he died—only that he ar gone," and he left his companion and sought his happy home. Happy home and loving wife, but earned in what a fearful manner! W. N. B.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS.—At a conference in Derby it has been resolved to form a national association for obtaining an Act prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors between eleven o'clock on Saturday evening and six on Monday morning, except to lodgers and travellers; and that a bill should be introduced at the next session to carry out the objects of the association.

NEW UNIFORM.—The new uniform for the cavalry and infantry of the Native Army of India has been at length decided on. The extravagant adornment and expense which characterised the regimentals of the old Cavalry Irregulars is much curtailed, the colours which distinguished the different corps being retained.

THE SIX-HUNDRED POUNDER.—An Armstrong 600-pounder was tried at Shoeburyness, on Friday, the 18th ult., with complete success. A target, in the shape of a section of the Warrior's side, was placed at 1,000 yards from the gun, and the first shell which struck it completely demolished it. The shell blew a hole in the target two feet by twenty inches wide. Never, it is said, was there such a complete triumph for the gun.

GALLANT ACT.—We are proud to record another gallant act of a young midshipman, in rescuing a sailor from drowning at the imminent risk of his own life. On Sunday the Pike steamer, tender to the flag-ship Royal Adelaide, at Devonport, under charge of Lord Charles Beresford, was returning from the Sound, with some boats in tow, when a drunken waterman fouled

the boats, and was thrown into the sea. The young midshipman, observing the accident, immediately jumped overboard, and rescued the drowning man. We remember having the pleasure of recording another act of this kind of devotion on the part of this young lord, when midshipman of the Defence, during the visit of the Channel squadron to Liverpool.

SCIENCE.

SMALLEST LOCOMOTIVE.—The smallest locomotive exhibited in the International Exhibition, 1863, in the English section, is a tank-engine for ironworks and collieries in South Wales, manufactured by the Neath Abbey Iron Company, for a gauge of 2 ft. 8 in., with 8 in. cylinders and four coupled cast-iron wheels of 2 ft. 4 in. diameter, 4 ft. apart centre to centre. The centre of the boiler is only 2 ft. above the rails. The boiler has $3\frac{1}{2}$ square feet of grate, and 59 tubes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter and 6 ft. long, giving a total heating surface of 181 square feet; the gross weight in working order is 6·85 tons. The tank is on the back of the boiler. The engine is carried on volute springs. The engines employed in the North Abbey Works have a run of nearly one mile, with gradients varying chiefly from 1 in 15 to 1 in 26, with a small portion 1 in 100; they take the return empty waggons up the incline to the coal pits, the full ones going down by themselves. With 80 lbs. pressure of steam the regular duty of the engine is to take up 16 empty waggons or trams, weighing altogether 6·45 tons, or nearly the weight of the engine itself, in 7 minutes, or at the rate of 8 miles an hour. With 66 lbs. steam it can take up at the same speed 12 waggons weighing 4·50 tons.

PHOTO-SCULPTURE.

REFERENCES from time to time have appeared in the papers respecting this novel application of photography. Preparations are being made in Paris for carrying it out on a very extensive scale. The results are stated to be very successful. The *modus operandi* will be easily understood. The sitter or object to be sculptured is placed in the centre of a well-lighted, spacious apartment; twenty-four or even a larger number of cameras are ranged in a circle around him, at equal distances from each other, with plates duly prepared, and by a simple mechanical arrangement the operator, by one movement of the hand simultaneously uncovers all the lenses, and after a sufficient length of exposure closes them. The plates are then developed in the usual manner, a sufficient number of operations being employed for the purpose, and proofs are subsequently printed. There are thus obtained twenty-four or more views of the subject from twenty-four or more different points of sight. Each view is then in succession, by means of a magic lantern arrangement, thrown upon a screen on an enlarged scale.

In order to transfer these likenesses from the photographs to the modelling clay, an instrument on the principle of the pentagraph is then made use of, having a tracer at one end and a cutting tool at the other. The lump of modelling clay is fixed on a stand capable of turning on its axis, with divisions corresponding to the number of photographs employed, and is placed in a position so that while the tracer of the pentagraph passes over the outline of the photograph thrown on the screen, the cutting tool at the other end cuts the clay into the corresponding outline. The clay is then shifted one division on its axis, and the next corresponding photograph thrown on the screen, and the operation repeated, and so on in succession till the clay has the twenty-four or more outlines accurately transferred to it. It then only remains for the artist to connect these tracings or outlines on the clay, and here, of course, his skill is shown. The artist thus has a large amount of work mechanically and rapidly prepared for him, and he is enabled, in a comparatively short time, to execute a model combining all the truthfulness of mechanism and the skill of the artist. From this model casts in plaster, or statues in marble, can be taken in the usual way. It is stated that the sculptures thus produced are remarkably good, and can be supplied at a very cheap rate, as compared with sculpture produced entirely by hand.

CURIOUS MEDICAL FACTS.—It is a curious thing that life among the Arabs is of a more healthy kind than the life of the self-same Arabs brought into town (even the Spahis in Paris got sick lately till encamped along with their horses and cows), and the reason has only leaked out gradually. Such Arabs have no disease like measles or small-pox, that, amongst the Chinese to wit, either renders blind or kills 30 per cent. of the population. The Arabs lie asleep with their horses and oxen. The "grease," a peculiar disease of horses, gives cow-pox to the cows, and this latter saves the Arab children from small-pox. Measles is another disease, as well as consumption, that they escape. Some striking facts go to show that measles arise from

feathers and straw used in nurseries for children. Seventy per cent. of the cases spread and arise from infection, so this the Arabs escape. Consumption, again, is a disease unknown amongst Arabs, living in the open air; it is a disease as certainly arising from bad ventilation in close rooms as that the sun rises in the east. It is now believed that tobacco is less injurious to the world than sugar, as the latter is the root of a series of diseases ending in rheumatism and diseased heart.—*Dr. Kidd.*

THE FIRST IRON-CLAD SHIP OF WAR.—In 1613, William Adams, in a letter from Japan, dated December of that year, in a mention of his voyage from Firando to Oosaka through the Inland Sea, by the Strait of Simoneski, writes thus:—"We were two dales rowing from Firando to Faccate. About eight or ten leagues on this side the straights of Xeminasque we found a great towne, where there lay in a docke a juncke eight hundred or a thousand tonnes burthen, sheathed all with yron, with a guard appointed to keeper her from firing and treachery. She was built in a very homely fashion, much like that which describeth Noah's arke unto us. The naturals told us that she served to transport soldiers to any of the islands if rebellion or warre should happen."

THE MANUFACTURE OF SPIRITS (ALCOHOL) FROM COAL GAS.—The permission to work a French patent for the manufacture of brandy from coal gas has recently been purchased for a large sum by an English company, and the work of manufacture is on the point of being started in London. Coal gas, as many know, is a mixture of several sorts of gases, and olefiant gas, the chief illuminating principle of coal gas, is one of these. The richer, therefore, that any coal gas is in this principle, the better fitted is it for the manufacture of spirits (brandy or whisky). Now, it happens that the coal gas made in Scotland, and in Bristol, is among the very best produced anywhere, and accordingly we may expect that this new use will be quickly found for our coal gas, and that possibly the price may come to be enhanced by the circumstance. It is not our purpose to talk of the process, but we may, in a word, remark that olefiant gas consists of carbon (charcoal) and hydrogen, and alcohol consists of the same ingredients and oxygen. By taking away one-half of the hydrogen of the gas, and adding the proper amount of oxygen, alcohol is formed. The old joke that represented a man who was half-seas over as being "gassed," will not be found far from the truth after all.

THE MODERN INVENTOR OF GREEK FIRE.—Levi Short, the inventor of the celebrated "Greek fire," died in Philadelphia on the 26th ult.

THE ROYAL "BARON OF BEEF" AT WINDSOR.—As her Majesty and the Royal family spent their Christmas at Osborne, the Royal "baron of beef," which this season was provided by Mr. Bedborough, the Queen's purveyor, of High-street, Windsor, was sent to the Castle, and roasted in the royal kitchen on the previous Wednesday, and afterwards forwarded cold to Osborne on Thursday, where it did good service in adorning her Majesty's sideboard on Christmas-day. The "baron" was cut from a fine fat ox lately purchased by Mr. Bedborough from one of the royal herds in Windsor-park.

MOURNING IN INDIA.—In India there is general lamentation for the death of Lord Elgin. His lordship was perfectly collected, and himself ordered telegrams to be despatched to England as well as to the several local governments, and gave all necessary orders respecting the return of his family to Europe. After taking leave of his family, he made his will, and desired to be buried at Dhurrumsalla. Lady Elgin, after his death, proceeded to Calcutta, with Dr. McRae, where arrangements were ready for her departure to England. Sir William Denison, governor of Madras, being the next senior Indian Governor, left Madras, by the steamer Arracan, on the 26th November, for Calcutta, where he assumes the office of Governor-General, until the appointment or arrival of a successor.

THE FRENCH EMPEROR'S REPLY TO THE SENATE.—The Emperor made the following reply to the address of the Senate presented by the deputation. "Good is the sole motive-power of my actions both at home and abroad. I desire the appeasing of passions with concord and union. I direct all my wishes to the moment when the great questions which divide Governments and peoples will be peacefully solved by European arbitration. This wish was that of Napoleon when he wrote from St. Helena that 'to fight in Europe is to make civil war.' May not this great thought, an Utopia in the past, shortly become a reality? It is always an honour to proclaim a principle tending to remove the prejudices of another age. Let us unite our efforts for this noble end, and let us only study obstacles to vanquish them, and incredulity to confound them."



[GRIANA LOVELOCK IN PERIL.]

SIBYL'S CLIFF.

CHAPTER XII.
A SECOND FORGERY.

SIR RASHLEIGH was warmly welcomed back to the manor-house by his uncle; for the old baronet, weakened by disappointment and illness, desired a stout nature to lean upon, and that, too, belonging to a relative and not a menial. The nephew assumed as much cheerfulness as he could muster in replying to the demonstrations of affection he received, and was more assiduous than ever in the discharge of his duties. But he found no contentment either in them or in his studies. Peace had for ever fled his heart. The vulgar culprit, standing but a little above the level of the brutes, with uninformed mind, and with senses steeped in habitual fumes of spirit, may, for a long time, perhaps, deaden his sensibilities and silence his conscience, but the man of culture and position cannot so soon still the accusing voice within him. Brandon was tortured, racked and haunted; his life was a perpetual war with himself; his days periods of dogged endurance, his nights, hours of ghastly strife with phantoms. Yet the man quailed not—shrunk not back from the path he had resolved to tread. Ambition fired his heart—he still courted the rewards of genius and daring, the applause of men, the love of women.

In pursuance of his profound plans, he had already winged a poisoned shaft to the heart of his uncle—he had now to prepare another envenomed arrow for the heart of his victim's widow. Yet he half-persuaded himself that this second blow was merciful. If it rudely dashed her hopes to earth, still she was young, and, instead of disappointed expectations to contend with, the heart-wearying toil of watching and waiting, she might summon up her resolution, face the world, and create a future for herself and her child.

It was in his secret study—now become the laboratory of crime—that Sir Rashleigh forged this second bolt. Practice had now enabled him to imitate the writing of the murdered heir with perfect ease, yet after he had accomplished his task, he compared every letter with the genuine manuscripts he had in his possession, and did not seal it until it had borne the test of this rigid collation. This document, addressed to Mrs. Franklin, was a brief one. The first sentence was a death-blow to hope.

"We shall never meet again," said the letter. "We have endured so much misery together, that the thought of it is madness. A free woman once more,

yet young and beautiful, you have the means of creating a brilliant future.

"In renouncing you, I am not unmindful of the love which I bore you and the love that you bore me. But I must forget that and forget you. Such is the imperious will of the proud family to which I belong, and the condition on which, after years of estrangement, they have received me back. I have more than once hinted, you must have perceived, that I was not born in the humble sphere in which I have been content to move for years.

"You will the more readily consent to the separation which is become necessary, when you know that the man whom you loved and honoured is a villain—such is the name that the world gives to one who has treated a woman as I have treated you. Learn, then—to explain the mystery of this sentence—that you are not my wife.

"The man who professed to solemnize our marriage had no legal authority to do so. It was a false priest and a false marriage that made you mine. I loved you—I loved you dearly—but not enough to jeopardize the splendid fortune to which I was heir, and to which I intended some day to lay claim—which I could only succeed to by marrying a person to whom I was betrothed when a mere boy, and who is still ready to accept my hand.

"The wild romance of my life is gone—worn and wasted away—the scales have fallen from my eyes—and I now look on the world with the calm, practical gaze of reason. I have had a struggle to arrive at this conclusion, but the struggle is over, I have accepted my destiny, and it is on the eve of my marriage that I pen these farewell lines.

"I enclose you a hundred-pound note. From time to time, I shall make you a remittance—enough to secure you and our child from want, and to enable you to get into some business on your own account. This money will be handed to you by a sure messenger, so that, when you change your lodgings you will always be careful to leave your address behind.

"Any attempt to track me, or to identify me, will be the signal for my cessation to provide for your necessities. Long ere this reaches you, I shall be the husband of a woman my equal in rank and wealth. The die will have been irrevocably cast.

"Oh! Caroline, pity me! I have tried to write coldly and harshly, but my heart is breaking. I have wronged you—I have parted with my good angel—I have sold myself for wealth and rank—immolated myself to the exigencies of that hideous Juggernaut called society. But it is all over. I was always weak and vacillating. I have fallen among those who

mould such natures as mine as the potter moulds his clay. Farewell, farewell for ever!

"FRANKLIN."

Sir Rashleigh, having enclosed the money referred to in the letter, sealed it up and addressed it. He then called for his horse, and rode across the country to a far-distant post-town which he had never visited before. At the outskirts of this town he dismounted, and, accosting a country boy, engaged him to deposit the letter in the post-office and pay the postage, for which he remunerated the lad, but not so largely as to attract attention. He then returned to the manor-house, certain that in a few hours, the terrible missive would reach its destination.

After the lapse of a few days, he rode over to Claremont and stopped at the village inn, with the landlady of which he had some acquaintance. This woman was an inveterate gossip, and Sir Rashleigh knew that a simple inquiry after the local news would bring down on his head an avalanche of details including the pettiest occurrences that had transpired since his last visit.

He was not mistaken—the flood-gates of her reservoir of information having been removed, the good woman poured forth a steady tide of anecdote, scandal, censure and surmise, forming a whole volume of village history.

"That queer woman that lived with her boy in the old wooden house at the end of the long lane has taken herself off to other parts," she said, among other things.

This was the only fact in the whole budget of news that Sir Rashleigh cared to hear; but he asked, with an air of the most perfect indifference:

"What woman?"

"Why—didn't I ever tell you about her? A woman that has been living there some weeks. She and her husband lived there very poorly and shabbily. They made no acquaintances, and the man only came to town once or twice after nightfall to make some purchases. I fancy he wasn't at home much, either. It's like, from his ways, that he was a poacher or something worse. He disappeared some weeks ago—at least the carrier, who drives through the town, and has a sharp eye in his head, says he hasn't seen a man about the premises for some days. This Mrs. Franklin, that was what she called herself, was said to be very handsome—I never saw her myself—but the carrier says she was the handsomest woman he ever set eyes on. I say, though, that handsome is that handsome does—and she couldn't have been a very good one, for she never went to church. Our good parson, took the pains to walk over there and call

twice, though it's a good six miles from the parsonage, but do you believe it, Sir Rashleigh, though he knocked and knocked, my lady wouldn't let him in! She 'wasn't at home' as fine folks says. That is, she pretended not to be at home, but the parson heard her scurrying up-stairs as plain as he ever heard anything. He told me so himself, for the good man stopped here to rest himself, and take a mug of my home-brewed. Well, to make a long tale short, one day, not long ago, the postman came here to take a drop, and he showed me a letter he had for this Mrs. Franklin. It was directed in a beautiful hand, and the man said it felt as if it had money in it. I'd have given the world to know what was in that letter, especially when I heard of what happened afterwards. In about an hour, Sir Rashleigh, I see the postman coming back, so I axed him into the parlour, and would he take a drop of summat, at which he said he were agreeable, having finished his rounds for the day, and being powerful tired like. So he sits down in this very parlour, just where you're sitting, Sir Rashleigh, and I goes into the bar to mix him a tumbler of 'ot brandy-and-water, which I brings him, and sits down at the table with him while he drinks it, which he sips and says: 'Your good health, Mrs. Maxim,' which I answers, 'I am much obliged.' Then says the postman, says he, 'Mrs. Maxim, I gives that 'ere letter to the 'ooman in the lane, and she smiles werry agreeable when she sees the handwritin', and I bids her good morning, ma'am. But I doesn't go away quite yet, Mrs. Maxim, but looks through the rose-bushes into the parlour-window, where I sees her tear open the letter. The first line she reads she gives a 'orrible scream, and strikes her 'ead to her 'ead. Then she reads on a little further, and then she falls down all of a heap. Then her boy comes to her, and she catches 'im in 'er arms, and presses 'im to her 'eart. Then she picks up the letter and herself, and reads it over and agin, and then she takes to crying, and beating her breast, and tearing her hair. But after a while she gets a little calmer, and I mizzles. Very queer, ma'am, isn't it?'

"And that was the last seen of her?"

"Not quite. Two days afterwards, she came into town and went to the bank, and got a hundred-pound note changed—paid her rent up to this very day, and left the key. She was afterwards seen to join her boy, who was waiting in charge of a large bundle outside the village, and that was the last seen of them. The landlord found only a few old chairs and tables, and some cooking things, not worth five pounds, in the house."

"And no one has met her since in the neighbourhood?"

"Not a soul. She disappeared as she came—but I say it's good riddance of bad company. Claremont is none the better for such cattle."

As soon as he could do so without exciting remark, Sir Rashleigh paid for the refreshments he had ordered, called for his horse, and rode back to the manor-house. His cruel stratagem had accomplished his intended purpose—the widow of his victim had been driven forth in despair—there was no danger of her ever crossing his path again.

CHAPTER XIII.

SIR RASHLEIGH EXHIBITS A NEW PHASE OF CHARACTER.

FIVE years have passed away since the date of the occurrences recorded in our last chapter—five weary years to most of the characters delineated in our story. Five years have deepened the lines on the noble countenance of the old baronet, and thinned and whitened his reverend locks; but sorrow has chastened his spirit, time has brought with it calmness and resignation, and his temper has become more even and engaging. It is only at rare intervals that his old fire bursts forth, and then it is but as a sparkle among the ashes. And the five years that have rolled over Sir Rashleigh's head have done their office, too. He is now in the prime of manhood, but he looks much older than his years. In spite of his constant exercise, his muscles have lost much of their old elasticity and vigour; his step is no longer firm and assured, as it was of old; he cannot ride so far and fast as he used to do. Sometimes of a morning, his hand trembles as he lifts his cup of coffee to his lips. His cheeks are hollow and his eyes dim; but still he is handsome and interesting, such a man as ladies love to look upon. And many bright eyes do look kindly upon the presumptive heir of Oakland Manor, for he had all the external charms of those heroes of romance that have bewildered so many pretty heads. But this exterior was the silver veil of the dread prophet of Khorassan, the heart it shrouded was a charnel-house of dreadful mysteries. Sir Rashleigh had sometimes thought of marriage, had sometimes deemed that the presence of a pure and beautiful creature would drive away that other spirited presence that haunted him by day and night.

"Why don't you marry, Rashleigh?" the old baronet would sometimes say. "The old manor-house is large enough, surely, to contain another inmate, and my fortune ample enough to afford you a liberal allowance."

Still that word "allowance!" Still a bounty conceded. When would the ample fortune be wholly in his hands? Thus Sir Rashleigh brooded and speculated. The old baronet was no longer a robust man, but he had adopted a very simple mode of living, and of late he had had no attacks of acute malady. He might live on to eighty or ninety. He might outlive Sir Rashleigh even! When this contingency suggested itself, his brow would grow dark, and terrible ideas would suggest themselves to a mind grown familiar with crime.

But another reason kept this guilty schemer single. He had not yet met a woman who had the power to touch his heart. Pretty and accomplished girls flitted like butterflies in the circles that he forced himself to frequent, but they came and went like those brilliant ephemera before his eyes; nor had he met, even in London, the woman with whom he could consent to link his fate; for she must be beautiful, be gentle, and yet possessed of ambition and of powerful intellect—an almost impossible combination of antagonistic qualities.

Now-a-days, Sir Rashleigh ran up to London frequently, in the gay season, and went the rounds of city dissipation as regularly as a professional man of the town. He drove fine horses, and dressed well, which secured him the favour of the merely fashionable; while his rich literary and scientific acquisitions gained him a reputation with the more solid men who congregated in this great British capital.

He was sitting in his club-house, one day after dinner, with Captain Eustace Jolliffe, a dashing young guardsman, who had more beauty than brains, when that slayer of battalions suddenly burst forth:

"By Jove! it's too hard on a fellow! I've got to go down to Leicestershire to see the governor about some law business, and must start in the next train. I depended on seeing Adriana to-night."

"What! the new actress at Drury Lane?"

"Yes—she plays Romeo for her benefit, you know."

"I did not know it," said Sir Rashleigh.

"Why, it's the town talk what a wonderful creature she is!"

"I never saw her," said Sir Rashleigh, with a yawn.

"You are a most singular fellow," said the guardsman. "Here's the town talk, and the town boast; all the men dying for her, all the women jealous of her; and you haven't had the curiosity to see her!"

"Is she so very fascinating?"

"Fascinating! She'd bewitch an anchorite! But she's a great actress as well as a great beauty."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; and of savage virtue! She treats the green-room dangles with unaffected scorn. Lord Sidney Siffenough wrote her a letter the other day, and the next time she saw him, she gave him such a rebuke, that he has actually retired to the continent. I tell you, she's a perfectly wonderful woman!"

"You excite my curiosity. I suppose it's too late to purchase a ticket."

"Twenty guineas have been refused for one."

"Then I must give it up."

"No you shan't. You are entirely welcome to my ticket; best seat in the house—an orchestra stall."

The captain handed a ticket to Sir Rashleigh as he spoke.

"For my honour," he said, "you are really obliged to me, you know. D'ye know, I had thought of cutting the governor for the sake of the actress, but there would have been such a precious row, that I didn't dare to try it on. Bye, bye, old fellow, my cab's at the door. When I come back to London, you shall tell me how you like *la belle Adriana*."

Sir Rashleigh repaired to Drury Lane at an early hour, and found himself in one of those dense crowds which popular enthusiasm often assembles in the great metropolis. An English theatre, filled with the beauty, fashion, rank and intellect of the capital, affords a rare spectacle of splendour. On this occasion the boxes contained a score of women, each one of whom might have adorned a throne. Their native attractions almost obliterated the luxury of their attire, though many a peeress in the dress circle wore diamonds worth the ransom of a kingdom. The atmosphere was heavy with perfume, intoxicating the senses, and when strains of the sweetest music rolled upward to the painted dome, there seemed nothing wanting to complete the enchantment of this realm of fascination. Even Sir Rashleigh forgot for a moment the deep inner tragedy of his life, and was charmed out of himself by the intoxicating brilliancy of the scene.

The rising of the curtain found him, therefore, in a fit frame of mind to enjoy the creation of the great

poet by whom England would be remembered if all her other greatness were forgotten. The opening scenes of the play were impatiently listened to by the audience, so eager were they all for the first entrance of Adriana as Romeo. She came, and then the thundering acclaim that went up from a thousand voices, joined to twice a thousand hands, shook the lofty theatre from roof to foundation-stone. It was a tribute to such rare loveliness as seldom graces the earth—a face so beautiful, a figure so exquisitely moulded as Adriana's is seldom found out of the domains of artistic imagination. Some Praxiteles creates a statue from the combined charms of a thousand models, and calls it a woman, and we feel, though we admire, that she exists but in the brain and in the marble. But here was a being—a breathing, sentient being—who surpassed the world-renowned ideals of art, the dreams of its Titians and Canovas. Yet, as Romeo, the charms of the actress were rather veiled than displayed. Some actresses only don the male attire to give a greater grace and emphasis to their feminine attractions; but Adriana Lovelace was an artist, and her Romeo was a young man with the step, attitudes and bearing of a cavalier. The illusion was only incomplete because the spectator felt that no man was ever so exquisitely graceful.

It was not until the scene in Capulet's garden that she had an opportunity of displaying her genius; and then her elocution, her passion, the music of her voice, charmed every ear. In particular passages, her delivery thrilled many a heart that had deemed itself dead to poetry and love; awakened many a memory in the aged, many a hope in the young. The reply to Juliet's warning of her kinsman's hostility:

Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enemy.

was received with thunders of applause. In the third act, where Romeo encounters and slays Tybalt, the whole house forgot entirely that a woman was before them, and saw only the fiery Italian cavalier, whose sword was prompt to avenge the death of his comrade, forgetful of all consequences. It was Shakespeare's Romeo, indeed. Thenceforward to the fall of the curtain, the performance was a series of triumphs.

Adriana was called before the curtain to receive showers of bouquets. Then it was that the woman appeared revealed—shrinking, blushing, almost terrified at the tumultuous cheers that greeted her. Sir Rashleigh Brandon surveyed her through his opera-glass. There was no triumph in her expression. The glow and inspiration of the stage had departed—there was even sadness in her smile—something pathetic in the deprecating grace of her acknowledgements. Was this the fiery swordswoman whose eye had glared along the glittering steel, whose hand had grasped the hilt, as if cased in iron, who had moved across the stage with the tread of a warrior? It was evident that with all the fire of genius, she possessed the tenderness and timidity of a true woman; that, after all, the tragedienne was

A creature not too bright and good
For human nature's daily food.

He felt deeply interested in her. While others applauded, he only gazed on her intently. When she disappeared, he felt that the charm of the spectacle had vanished. The lights had lost their brilliancy, the flowers their perfume, the music its melody. Had this terrible nature at last succumbed to the tender passion? Was he as capable of love as of hate? Man is a strange enigma. Guilt cannot obliterate all the softer passions of his nature, and trails of tenderness are often met with in the hearts of tyrants.

At any rate, Sir Rashleigh Brandon went home that night more deeply impressed by the image of Adriana Lovelace than by any woman he had ever met in his life. He even asked himself if he should lose caste by marrying an actress. Some of the most brilliant ladies in the circle of English peeresses had owed their rank to the stage. Earls had gone thither for their brides, and a baronet might imitate their example, without running the risk of social proscription. But he dismissed the thought with a bitter sneer. He in love! Had he become a day-dreamer—a boy again? Still, the image of Adriana would not be banished by a sneer. It rose again, bright as a star, and he confessed to himself that he must see her once more.

CHAPTER XIV. NUMBER SEVENTEEN.

FIVE years have rolled away over the head of Bruno, and he is still painting Napoleons in Rue des Tenebres. But he no longer devotes all his time to the "Little corporal." He condescends to do portraits of his contemporaries, and nice landscapes which do sell, and some of his pictures have attracted attention in the "Exposition." Something has occurred to render it necessary to find a market for his talent. He has two mouths to feed instead of one.

Of course the reader, especially the lady reader, jumps to the conclusion that, in the maturity of his life, he has been seduced by some fair daughter of Eve into the toils of matrimony, and that his fair partner had persuaded him to devote at least a portion of his time to the production of pictures capable of being turned into ready money. But the reader is wrong; Napoleon Bruno is a confirmed old bachelor. No Madame Bruno will ever hang upon his arm, no infantile Bruno will upset his oil-bottles and capsize his easel. But he has taken under his charge, into his room, into his heart—he has been cherishing for years an unfortunate man whom he encountered by chance.

During a tour he made in the country, he was one day sitting sketching by the roadside, when he saw a man approaching him, roughly clad, but straight and well-formed. The stranger approached him shyly, and nodded. Bruno was very busy finishing the sketch of a picturesque ruined tower, and so scarcely noticed that the stranger halted and sat down beside him. Having occasion to obliterate a false line, he turned to pick up a bit of stale bread, which he brought with him to rub out pencil-marks, when he saw the strange man had seized it, and was devouring it eagerly.

"My friend," said the painter, you must be desperately hungry."

The stranger nodded.

"But there isn't enough to satisfy the appetite of a canny bird," continued the painter. "Hold! I have better provender here."

With this he opened his haversack and produced some sandwiches and a bottle of claret. The stranger uttered a cry of delight when he saw the food, eagerly clutched it and proceeded to devour it with ravenous voracity.

"I wish I had such an appetite as that!" mused the painter. "Are you thirsty?" he asked, when his chance guest had swallowed the very last crumb.

The stranger nodded.

"Then just put the neck of this bottle between your lips, if you please. Don't be afraid of it. It's light, and wouldn't hurt a baby."

The stranger required no second bidding, but putting the bottle to his lips, decanted its contents into his throat.

"Is that good?" asked Bruno, looking rather ruefully at the empty bottle.

The stranger nodded violently.

"Queer sort of genius," thought the painter. "Seems to hear well enough, but is rather tongue-tied. By the sacred name of Napoleon! he is a character. Halloa, my friend—can't you talk?"

The stranger nodded. As the painter looked at him narrowly, he was satisfied that he was a feeble-minded person, his eyes lacked intelligence, and he looked up at Bruno with exactly the wistful, tender expression of a dog.

"Well, you say you can talk?" continued the painter. "What is your name?"

"Numero Dix-Sept,"—Number Seventeen—answered the stranger, promptly.

"Well, that's very curious," said the painter. "We are in the habit of numbering kings so. We've had a Louis Dix-Sept, and Louis Dix-Huit—but Number Seventeen is rather a queer name for a private French citizen. Your godfather and godmother must have been very strange people. Are you sure you haven't got any other name?"

Still that same dog-like, wistful expression on the handsome features of the stranger. It suggested an idea to the poor, puzzled painter. He would try him with different names, as people do strange spaniels they pick up in the streets.

"Here, Jean, Jean!" he called out, snapping his fingers. "No, that won't do. Baptiste, Baptiste; poor fellow—good fellow. Baptiste! Pierre, I say, Pierre, my boy. That isn't it. Number Seventeen."

The stranger's countenance brightened up at the familiar name.

"Sure enough, he is Number Seventeen," thought Bruno. "Well, Number Seventeen, how old are you?"

Number Seventeen held up his fingers, then his feet, and then shook his head hopelessly.

"No great arithmetician," thought Bruno. "He's like the South Sea Islanders. They can reckon their fingers and toes, and then they're dead beat. I should say he was about five-and-thirty. A good-looking fellow—but the lack of expression spoils everything. A mere animal—but not a vicious one, I'll be sworn. Well, Number Seventeen," he resumed, "where do you come from?"

The stranger looked round furtively, pointed towards the north, shuddered violently, and pressed close to the side of the painter.

"Poor fellow," said the tender-hearted artist. "There's a mute but eloquent pathos in that pantomime. The poor imbecile has been harshly treated—starved—beaten, perhaps. There is more than one brute in this world that would abuse an idiot. Name

of Napoleon! such a man deserves to be blown from the muzzle of a cannon. Well, now, you have told me where you come from, will you be kind enough to inform me where you are going to?"

Number Seventeen shook his head hopelessly.

"Come along then, with me," said the painter, rising and pointing to the north, "this way; I'll take you back to your friends."

The stranger threw himself on his knees, and clasping the painter's hand, pointed to the north with a shudder and shaking his head, while two big tears starting from his eyes, rolled down his cheeks.

"My poor Number Seventeen!" cried the painter, shedding tears himself. "Forgive me for such a cruel experiment. No, no, you shan't go in that direction. Here lies our way," and he pointed towards the south. "You shall come with me, and I'll be a friend and brother to you. He's a second Casper Hauser," added the painter to himself.

No language can express the delight of the subject of his thoughts when his feeble intellect had grasped a vague idea of the purposes of his new friend. He laughed aloud—he sprang up, and snapped his fingers, and then a shade of sadness and sorrow suddenly came over his face, and he pressed his hand on his head with an expression of pain. But this expression was evanescent; his countenance brightened up again, and seizing the painter's haversack and bundle, he began to move off with vigorous steps in a southerly direction.

"Hold on, Number Seventeen!" cried the painter, good-humouredly, "I haven't got the seven-leagued boots on, if you have, and you must moderate your pace! Name of Napoleon! you'd do for a file-leader of a flank company of Zouaves. Steady, now, steady!"

This was the way in which Napoleon Bruno picked up a companion for his solitude. Every day he became more and more interested in his charge. Number Seventeen was perfectly childlike and docile. He learned slowly to read and write, and when at last his shyness wore off, he talked volubly enough, but always like a child rather than a man. His memory seemed very weak; indeed he appeared to have forgotten all his former life. He said something about his big home, in which were so many people, and about having been beaten. He was afraid of the darkness, and could never sleep soundly except when a light was burning. He almost always ran away, and hid himself when friends and sitters came to visit Bruno. But he evinced a most confiding attachment and gratitude to his benefactor. He was useful too, in various ways—such as grinding colour and preparing canvas.

It was an hour of honest triumph to poor Bruno when he succeeded in teaching his unfortunate friend to lay the background of a head, and the discovery that Number Seventeen possessed a remarkable eye for colour absolutely filled his soul with delight.

"Who knows," he thought, "but he may one day be able to help me to paint Napoleons?"

We have said that Number Seventeen avoided strangers. After he had been a long time with Bruno, he was persuaded to remain in the room when a particular friend of the painter, Dr. Auguste Belleville, an eccentric but benevolent phrenologist and surgeon, was present. But though he did not fly from the doctor, he evinced no desire to make his acquaintance. Exactly in proportion as this disinclination developed itself, so did the desire of the doctor for familiarity with this strange being become intensified.

"If I could only feel his bumps—if I could only make a cast of his cranium," said the doctor, "I should be perfectly happy."

"Where there's a will there's a way." The doctor devoted all the time he could spare from his hospital and general practice, to cultivate the phenomenon. He finally succeeded, by persistent familiarity, in taming the poor man. Then, day after day, he manipulated the painter's head, until Number Seventeen manifested a queer curiosity in the operation. He would pass his hand over his own head and imitate the action of the doctor, manifestly much amused by his exploit. But almost invariably, after doing so, an expression of perplexity, sadness and pain would darken his handsome features, and he would remain gloomy and silent for a long time.

"If I don't get at his head to-morrow, Napoleon," exclaimed Dr. Belleville, one day, "I shall give him up."

And, accordingly, the next day he came, armed with all the fascinations of his genial nature, unmasked the batteries of all his blandishments, and triumphed over the weak intellect of the painter's humble assistant. At last, oh, ineffable delight! he had Number Seventeen's head in his hands. At first he toyed with his prize, as a cat does with a mouse. His light fingers played with the thick curls of his patient, scarcely exerting more pressure than a passing zephyr. But after these preliminaries, he entered seriously on the manipulation of the interesting

cranium before him. Suddenly he started, and as suddenly poor Number Seventeen uttered a low cry, escaped from the hands of the doctor, and fled into the next room, moaning.

"What have you done?" cried the painter.

"I have made a discovery!" said the doctor. "Your protégé is no idiot. He was not born the imbecile he seems to be."

"Not born feeble-minded?"

"No, sir. I suspected it at the first, from the configuration of his head. By Jove, Napoleon, it's a noble one. I tell you, sir, that he has met with some accident—a portion of the skull has been depressed, and a compression of the brain has ensued. An operation—"

"I will not hear of an operation—you surgeons are the most terrible torturers—"

"Hush! Bruno—I will not hear a word against my profession. Tortures! a modern discovery has totally banished pain from the chambers of malady. The operation I propose is without danger, and I have performed it successfully a dozen of times. I will stake my reputation and my life in this case. If I fail, and harm comes to your friend, I will agree to take a dose of hydrocyanic acid, strong enough to kill a regiment of voltigeurs."

"If I was sure of the safety of poor Number Seventeen—"

"It is your duty to commit him to my charge. If he was my only son, I would subject him to the operation. Think, Bruno, what a triumph it would be to restore that man to the enjoyment of a bright and unclouded intellect, and to all the pleasures that intellect bestows."

"He is happy now."

"Not always—he is often moody, and often, I am now convinced, suffers acute pain. Neglect my advice, and any time he may die a cruel death."

"If you assure me of that, by the name of the great Napoleon: I will consent to give him into your hands."

"In that great name, I assure you of the truth of what I say."

In a day or two afterwards, the good physician and the painter took their poor friend to the hospital. The result of the experiment we shall learn in due season.

CHAPTER XV;

AN ACCIDENT.

THE fickle days of April had given place to the sunny skies of May, that season so dear to the hopes of youth, the realizations of manhood, and the memories of age. The birds were abroad in the blue sky, or flitting among the hedgerows, the hawthorn and apple blossoms filled the air with perfume. Even the ploughman paused in the furrow, now and then, to look up and around him in full appreciation of the charms of nature, though lacking words to express it.

No part of the country looked more exquisitely lovely than the park of Oakland Manor. In midsummer, there was perhaps, a little too much of gloom in the masses of well-developed foliage, but now the sunbeams played at will through the tender leaves of the giant oaks, and wove a golden mosaic on the many devious paths that wound beneath them.

Sir Rashleigh Brandon had wandered forth, enticed by the brightness of the atmosphere, or driven out of doors by the gloom of his study. He carried a rifle in his hand, though he sauntered listlessly along. Raising his eyes, he beheld a crow far over-head, winging its way to some distant quarry. He raised his weapon, and, drawing the trigger, the flight of the dark wanderer was arrested; the little black speck, that looked like a dot on the broad blue space, grew larger and larger, and the bird fell dead at his feet.

"One would have thought," muttered Sir Rashleigh, as he turned the trophy over disdainfully with his foot, "that I wielded the magic weapon of Der Frieschutz—"

But he was interrupted here by a piercing scream from a female voice, and, quick as thought, a white horse dashed towards him, on which was seated a lady pale with terror, who had lost all control over the frantic animal. Her riding-hat was gone, and her luxuriant hair streamed loosely on the wind. The flying steed, Sir Rashleigh knew, would, in a few leaps more, reach a gate that was closed and locked, and the shock of such a barrier would inevitably prove fatal to the rider.

In less time than we can recount, he had flung aside his rifle, dashed forward, and, at the peril of his life, seized the horse by the bridle. But the maddened animal reared aloft on his hind legs, while the lady clung with despairing tenacity to the saddle.

Sir Rashleigh conjured her to throw herself free from her seat, but whether she heard him or not, or whether her riding-skirt had become entangled, he knew not, his whole mind being now concentrated on the attempt to master the rearing horse. But though with a grip

of steel he caught him by the nostrils, his strength and skill were more than matched by the desperate fury of the wild horse. The animal tore himself from his grasp, and rearing higher than ever, fell over backwards, partly on his rider. Sir Rashleigh was beside the lady in a moment, and rescued her from her perilous position. She was motionless and pallid, and he laid her on a grassy bank, startled at the sudden change which had come upon her. But what was his astonishment when he recognized in her colourless countenance the features of Adriana Lovelace! He flew to a neighbouring brook, and filling his hat with water, returned to bathe the inanimate face of the sufferer, or the victim, for he knew not to what extent, or even if fatally, she had been injured. He placed his hand upon her heart, and detected a slight pulsation. Then her eyes unclosed, but the pale lids soon dropped over them, and only a low moan issuing with her labouring breath, showed that she was yet alive.

The horse had got up after his fall, and, though panting and shivering, had recovered from his fright. Standing a little distance off, he gazed wistfully at his mistress, as if half-conscious of the injury he had inflicted on her. Sir Rashleigh threw himself on his back, and rode furiously to the manor-house, where, hurriedly recounting to Mrs. Bell what had happened, he mustered four of the male servants, and bade them follow him with a mattress.

The lady was still nearly unconscious when they reached her, but uttered a low, moaning sound, as, with all possible tenderness, they lifted her upon the bed, and carefully bore her to the manor-house.

(To be continued.)

THE THREE ROSES.

CHAPTER XLV.

JANET.

Courage!—you travel through a darksome cave,
But still as nearer to the light you draw,
Fresh gales will meet you from the upper air,
And wholesome dews of heaven your forehead lave,
And darkness lighten more, till full of awe,
You stand in the open sunshine unaware.

R. C. French.

JANET STAUNTON! Have you lost sight of that gentle sufferer, reader? Is she forgotten, because, in the noise of violent and conflicting passions, and the shock of sudden and tragic events, the still music of her gentle life is unheard? She is not forgotten by any one near her. Mrs. Redclyffe, amid her heavy domestic trials, and Alice in her suffering, had still found room in their hearts for her. The old lady, who, now that her affections were satisfied with the presence of her "baby," had fallen into that quiet, blissful dotage, beautifully termed "second childhood," that state which is neither quite of earth nor quite of heaven, but seems a happy lingering of the soul between both—that loving, lovely close of a long and good earthly career, which is not death, but an easy, gentle translation of the soul to God—the old lady was Janet's constant companion. Those three—grandmother, Janet, and baby, occupied one room at Oak Lodge. The Duke de Lorraine came to visit and cheer them. In Janet, indeed, he found a special object for his life-giving mission, and he devoted himself to her with all his cheerful hope and charity. Perhaps no one in the world besides himself, could have "ministered" so successfully to this heart and "mind diseased." He had awakened her dormant religious affections, strengthened her faith, and revived her hopes; and with that genius, whose possession had acquired for him, among his more simple-minded parishioners, the reputation of miraculous power, he had even very much improved her physical health.

When he had succeeded in scattering that burning spot from Janet's breast, left by the old wound, when he had raised her spirits, and she was no longer suffering from pain, or "numbed" by despair, he told her that she must return to her father's house, and take her station daily by his sick bed; and Janet, who ever obeyed his voice, got into a carriage with her grandmother and her baby, and made old Betty "burst out a-crying" with joy by getting out of it at the door of the Limes. He had more than one good reason for directing this move; to explain which, I must go back a little.

It had not been deemed safe by his physicians to inform Roland Mildred of the fate of Jessie for some weeks, although for many reasons, known only to himself, he seemed to suspect it. When at last the manner of her death was made known to him, he received the news very quietly, merely saying to himself: "Yes—yes, insanity was hereditary in one branch of her mother's family—her uncle died in the lunatic asylum, and one of her aunts died of a brain fever." Then he turned his face to the wall, and spoke no more for hours. All that day and night he refused both food

and drink, and from that time he sank into deep gloom.

"Shall I never, never be happy again?" said the miserable man, as he tossed and tumbled about among the bedclothes and pillows.

Old Betty, who was sitting comfortably in a large, soft arm-chair before the fire, in her capacity of nurse, and occupying herself with toasting her feet, and looking at the pictures of a splendidly bound Bible—a copy utterly forbidden to vulgar fingers, on account of its splendour—now turned her head, and took a long, exceedingly self-complacent look at her master.

"Shall I never, never see another happy day?" groaned the now feverish and excited man.

"Never, sir, never!"

"Who spoke to you, you th—?" faltered the old man, checking, for the first time in his life, a profane expression upon his tongue; but a pillow was launched at her head from the hands of the enraged invalid, who instantly fell back, exhausted with the effort.

Betty tossed up the whites of her eyes, and ejaculated:

"You won't never be no happier yourself till you tries to make them as depends on you for happiness, happy! And them as depends entirely upon you for happiness is no strangers, but your own dear heart's child, Miss Janet, and that there poor motherless boy, Mr. Charles, as you drove off in the dead of winter to Eagle Cliff; and now what you have got to do, if you want your poor old sinful soul saved, is this: send for Mr. Staunton back, and give him a lift in the world—"

"Ar-r-r-r-h! he's murdering me!" yelled Betty, in the strong grasp of the fever-maddened man, who with the new and terrible strength of delirium, had suddenly sprung from his bed, dragging the sheets behind him, and seized his tormentor by the nape of her neck. "Oh, Mr. Lorraine, are you come at last!" exclaimed she, running for shelter into the arms of that gentleman, who had just then hurried into the room, at the sound of shrieks, "he's—he's got delirium-tremens, as used to attack him when he was a drinking man."

"Has he been taking any alcoholic spirits?" asked the Duke de Lorraine, when he had succeeded in getting him back to bed, and composing him.

"Sir?"

"Has he been drinking?"

"Oh, no, sir; not a drop—no, sir! Only I was setting his duty afore him, and he threw himself into a passion with me."

"What were you doing?"

"A-settin' of his sins afore him, as a faithful servant ought to do."

"And you raised his fever and frenzied him. Betty, do you want to kill your master?"

"Me kill him! Lord forgive you, Mr. Lorraine! Why, I'm the best friend he's got in the world, and the truest! Me want to kill him!"

"You must remember not rashly to handle holy things, as you do. Betty, you are a well-meaning woman, if we except a slight vein of sly malice; and a sensible one, barring an overweening self-esteem; but you have certainly nearly killed your master to-day by preaching out of time and place. 'There is a time for all things,' said the wise man, and the truth is to be spoken 'in love,' said the apostle."

"Yes, sir."

"Now, if you will promise never more to speak until I give you leave, I will, on my side, promise, that before the year is out, you and Sam shall have a little house, well-furnished, and a little plot of ground, with a horse, a cow, pigs, and some poultry."

The result of this affair was, that Maurice de Lorraine, on returning to Oak Lodge, had first sent Janet, now somewhat recovered, to the Limes; and then going to All Saints, had despatched Margaret Upham as a general protector.

The duke had more than one motive for sending Janet to her father, for though it was certain that the feeble one could do nothing in the way of nursing him, or even sit by his bedside for any great length of time together, yet her attendance there was a duty, and her mere presence had a salutary effect upon the health of the invalid, and exercised a softening and redeeming influence upon his heart. We know that when he first saw Janet, after her illness, his heart had melted, and his tears had fallen at the sight of his suffering child; that he might then have been led to repent his harshness, had his thoughts not soon been monopolized by the corroding jealousies and anxieties of his absorbing passion for Jessie; and his judgment not been unduly influenced by that wily girl, who knew, even amid their fierce quarrels, how to turn his anger against Staunton, whom she ever artfully presented to him as a heartless adventurer, who had speculated upon his daughter's affections and his own wealth and influence. And Roland, who had less keenness of perception than violence of temper and stubbornness of will, continued to act upon that view of the case up to the time of the catastrophe.

But now, under the influence of the discipline of Jessie's awful death, and his own prolonged illness, could he lie there on his bed of slow convalescence, and not be led to deep reflection on the past? or could he turn his eyes to where his daughter sat in her arm-chair by his bedside, and see her pale, suffering, but uncomplaining, heart-broken by his own harshness, and not wish to bind up that broken heart, and give it happiness?

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE MAIDEN'S INTERCESSION.

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes;
The mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

Though justice be thy plea, consider this—
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.

Shakespeare.

How quiet it was in the sick-room on Easter Tuesday morning. A small, bright fire was burning in the grate at the same time that—for the weather was dry, clear, and pleasant—the windows were slightly raised, and the blinds partly open to let in the fresh and "sunny air." They had done breakfast, and the room was made very tidy and cheerful; and the now rapidly-recovering invalid, newly shaved and refreshed, sat in bed propped up with pillows. The old lady, placidly smiling to herself, reposed in an easy chair by the fire; while Janet sat by her father's bedside, with her baby sleeping on her lap, as though she had forgotten to lay it down. She was looking at her in a pensive, half-abstracted manner. She was silent, patient, and serene as ever. She had fallen into one of her reveries, and did not know that her father's eyes, full of mournful affection, were gazing on her. Her thoughts were far away. He leaned over, and supporting his head upon his hand, while he rested on his elbow, stretched his other hand out, and, laying it affectionately on her pale, golden hair, said:

"Janet, my child!"

She looked up.

"What are you thinking of, my dear?"

She dropped her eyelids, and two large tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

"My child, have you ever heard from Charles since he went away?"

Now the tears streamed.

"Say, dear. I have a reason for asking you, my love."

A suffocating sob of:
"No, never, never once," was the almost unintelligible answer.

"Did you love him so dearly, then, Janet?"

Her sobs grew now hysterical. She leaned her face down upon the side of the bed.

"Don't cry, my dear, don't cry."

But she sobbed the more.

"Don't cry, don't! Affairs are not so desperate as you think, child. Don't cry so much!"

"Father, let me; it is the first time—I've shed a tear—since he went away! You called him 'Charles'—kindly—and that—that—touched my heart—and—and—let me cry!" sobbed Janet, convulsively, while the poor father, who could not guess the good this great thaw of congealed tears was doing her, fretted and fumed. As soon as she could speak, she commenced again, and between broken sobs, said:

"Father, forgive—not him, for he was not to blame, but—me, for it was my fault! I loved him so much, so much, so much, father! Father, forgive me; bless and dismiss me, that I may go and seek him."

"Seek him, poor child! Do you know where he is?"

"No, father, but God will lead me to him."

"You! you poor, thin, pale thing, that pant when you come up-stairs!"

"God will strengthen me, father. Give me your blessing, and let me go."

"Wouldn't it be better to bring Charles back here?"

"Ah! father, if you would—if you would—you would make me so, so happy! But oh! father, how will you find out where he is?"

"I know where he is!"

"You, father! you know where he is! Oh! father if you do, tell me! tell me! Oh, father, you have my life and death in your hands—give me life!"

"Janet, my child, hope all things. This I will tell you for your comfort. I took you from Eagle Cliff, and permitted Staunton to leave broken-hearted, because I was justly incensed against you both, and wished to punish you both, as well as to try him—to test his fidelity and integrity. I wasn't sure he was altogether evil. Though I disliked him so much, that I cared not the toss-up of a penny whether he stood the test or not; yet, in the event of his standing

"I was fully determined to bring him back to you. I was compelled to be silent as the grave about it, and even act a malignity I did not always feel, in order to blind people to my thoughts, and give my test a fair chance to work. Well, I never lost sight (morally speaking) of him for one hour after he left here, or for one hour since. You know who left in his company?"

"No, sir."

"Maggy's cousin. And I wrote to him and have been in secret correspondence with him ever since."

"Oh, father!"

"It is absolutely necessary, my dear. A penniless man who carries off an heiress is an object of suspicion, and must be submitted to a severe test before confidence may be safely reposed in him. Well, I am happy, for your sake, to say that he has stood the test—he has been true even to the severe condition that obliged him not to seek a reunion with you."

"Father, father! you compelled him to make that promise?"

"Yes! and then I was in earnest—my more merciful thought was an after-thought. Well, he has stood the test; and so, as we can't unmake him your husband, the father of my grandchild, and my own son-in-law; perhaps—mind, I say, perhaps—I'll write for him to come home."

"And I, father, will never cease to pray you to do so until I see my prayers of no avail, and then, with my baby in my arms, I will go and seek him."

While this scene was taking place above stairs, another was transpiring below. "Monsieur le Duc de Lorraine" had ridden over to the Limes, and asked for Margaret Upham, who still remained there as a temporary mistress of the house. The news of his change of circumstances had preceded him in a note carried by a messenger from Oak Lodge, who, every morning was despatched to inquire after Roland's amendment.

The duke was closeted with Margaret, and his manner was very serious, and her eyes were red with weeping. He had been confiding to her Jessie's whole secret history. When he had finished he said:

"And now, knowing that when we had supposed him to be getting well, the news of Jessie Appleton's fate threw him back so dangerously, I have been, up to this time, fearful of speaking on the subject to Roland Mildred again; fraught with so much pain as the story of her perfidy must be. Still, in justice and in mercy to his daughter and her husband, he ought very quickly to know how they were betrayed into marriage by another's artful misrepresentations."

"You may tell him with safety now, I think; at least, it is not right longer to delay," said Margaret, wiping her eyes, and resuming her cheerfulness. "I will go up and inform him that you are here."

And she went.

"Yes," said Roland, "let him come in!" and soon after, Maurice entered the sick chamber.

"I suppose I may be permitted to congratulate you upon the happy change in your circumstances, Monsieur le Duc de Lorraine," said Roland, gruffly, in the tone of—"I suppose you think yourself a very important personage—who gave you leave to be any happier than anybody else?"

"Thank you. Wish me joy of a happier coming event—my approaching union with your niece, Alice."

"Ah, indeed! When is that to come off?"

"Our marriage is delayed by circumstances over which you yourself have the greatest control. Your own restoration to health, and, pardon me, the reunion of Janet with her husband."

"Lorraine! I beg your forgiveness, monsieur le duc—I am not—because I happen to have been ill—grown feeble as a child, to be tutored by all around me," said Roland in an irritated tone; for like all other weak-minded persons, he was very much afraid of having it supposed that he could be influenced.

"I do not presume to wish to tutor you, my good sir; I have only certain revelations to make that will throw a new light upon that affair of the elopement."

"Revelations! Humph! it seems to me that you have become a book of revelations."

"Are you strong enough to hear a somewhat tedious story?"

"Don't know, indeed, Lorraine—beg your pardon, monsieur le duc."

"I will make it as short as possible, then," said Maurice, with unfeigned serenity, and forthwith commenced giving him the whole history of the runaway match.

Roland listened with unusual self-command, only ejaculating "humph!" and "ah!" at certain points. He showed not much pain at the discovery of Jessie Appleton's perfidy; for, in reality, his passion for her was of that nature which required the presence of its

object to excite it; and now, between the loss of her presence and his own illness, it became to him only as the memory of a severe fever. He listened to this secret history with some degree of satisfaction. He began to feel a wish, and, indeed, a positive necessity of recalling Staunton, and he wanted very much a plausible excuse for relenting. A feeling more lively than this mere satisfaction, an emotion of generous regret, and a wish to compensate the boy and girl he had so deeply injured, crossed his mind.

Then, when, after silently awaiting his comments for awhile, Maurice ventured to inquire concerning his probable course of action, he said importantly:

"This matter requires mature deliberation, monsieur le duc."

"I am afraid, you do not do half justice to the goodness that dwelt in Maggy's merry heart. She was waiting on the steps for Maurice when he came down."

"And so you could get nothing out of him?"

He said, when he told her the result of his visit.

"He takes time for mature deliberation."

"Yes; a judge taking time for mature deliberation as to whether he will pardon or not, and when, and how far, while the culprits are bound upon the rack. This must be put a stop to. I will go myself and talk to him. He is fond of me. I will go and coax him."

"Do not go, my dear Margaret, to-day; he is too much excited, and I am afraid of a return of fever, therefore I left him so suddenly. Go to-morrow morning, my dear child," said the duke, taking leave of her.

"I will go up and stay with your father, Janet, dear, while you and grandmother (Maggy, since coming to the house, had always affectionately called the old lady grandmother) eat breakfast," said she the next morning, and accordingly ran up-stairs and entered Roland's room. He was up now, and seated in a crimson damask arm-chair by the fire. By his side stood a nice little mahogany stand, covered with a white cloth, and an elegant little breakfast service for one person. Betty was standing waiting on him.

"Will you take some breakfast, Maggy?" cheerfully inquired Roland.

"Indeed, I am afraid there's not enough for yourself," laughed Margaret.

"I do not, in fact, know that there will be enough for two, since the second is little Nimrod; indeed, I half-repent my invitation—say 'No, thank you,' Miss Margaret."

"No, thank you, sir; I came up only to wait on you. Betty, go down and nurse the baby."

"Nurse the baby! I think it's about time I'd done with that," said Betty, grumbling, but obeying.

Maggy had chosen her time well—when, refreshed by a good night's sleep and by his bath, "newly-shaved"—fresh as a bridegroom, in his large easy-chair, by the genial bright fire, enjoying all the creature comforts with the infinite, the inevitable gusto of a convalescent. Maggy went at her innocent flattering with little tact; and finally, after he had eaten and lingered long over a very hearty breakfast, Maggy sat down on a low stool close by his side, and leaning her elbows on the arm of his chair, rested her chin upon the palms of both hands, and looked up in his face.

"Well, what is it, Maggy? for, of course, all this means that you want something of me."

"Yes, I do," said she, in a low tone; "but it is not for myself."

"Of course it is not; who ever heard of your ever saying, doing, or thinking anything for yourself? God bless little Nimrod. How refreshing a good girl is," said the squire, patting her black, curly-haired head approvingly, and stroking down her damask cheek. "Now, what is it, Maggy? for, to be sure, there is a good chance of your suit being gained; there are few things I could refuse little Nimrod."

"Then I wish, if you please—I should be so thankful to you if you would—would not be so extremely hard-hearted and cruel to poor dear Charles and Janet."

"Hard-hearted and cruel! Humph! Your manner of advocating a cause should immortalise you as a diplomatist," drily commented Roland. "Well, I suppose that's wholesome truth, and no flattery," he added mentally; then, speaking aloud, said:

"Well, what am I to do?"

"Deal justly by them, sir."

"Humph! There it is again. No appeal to—well, it's well I'm inclined to favour her petition," thought Roland; and then he said: "And if I do, Maggy, what then?"

"Oh, sir, they will be so very happy."

"And I?"

"Oh, sir, never mind about you."

"What?"

"I mean, sir, that there is nothing to disturb your

happiness, and that we are not anxious on the subject."

"Humph! but I should be alone."

"You would have the company of your daughter and son-in-law, and their child or children, sir."

"Oh, my daughter and son-in-law, they will be absorbed in each other; and as for their child, or children, I am not fond of babies."

"Well, sir, at least you will have—"

"I will have nothing," said Roland; "and the fact is, that I am not going to sacrifice myself for undutiful children."

"Oh, sir, you—"

"I won't!" he exclaimed, for he was in one of his wilful moods, and wished to torment Margaret, whose want of diplomacy had certainly contributed to raise the present perverse spirit. "No, I will not!" he repeated.

Margaret coaxed, entreated, wrung her hands, wept.

"No!" was all the satisfaction she got.

She renewed her coaxing, entreating, and weeping.

In vain.

"No!" was the finale.

"Oh, mercy," she exclaimed, "I thought you had repented; I thought you were going to reform, and here you are, as wicked as ever, and swearing as hard as ever!"

"When the devil got sick, the devil a saint would be; when the devil got well, the devil a saint was he!"

replied Roland, laughing.

"Oh, indeed it is too shocking to hear you, and I am going away," said Maggy, "more in sorrow than in anger," rising to depart.

"Come back, little Nimrod! Come back, little girl."

"No, I will not come back, you distress me too much," said she, deeply wounded to see any one acting and talking with so much irreverence and profanity.

"Come back, little Nimrod; I have somewhat to say to thee concerning my daughter and her husband."

"Well, sir?"

"It seems to me, you have abandoned their cause very rashly," said Roland; who, after all, liked well to be coaxed by her.

At it she went again with all her might and main.

"You say you love Janet, sir. Ah, you cannot! If you did, you would sacrifice any selfish feeling for her sake."

"Do you love her, little Nimrod?"

"Ah, ask her if I do not, sir."

"Then you would be willing to do a great deal for her sake?"

"Try me, sir."

"It is in your power to make her happy!"

"How, sir?"

"By reuniting her and her husband."

"I guessed that much, sir, for that only would make her happy—nothing else certainly would! I mean, how is it in my power?"

"You can purchase her pardon."

"How, sir? I say again."

"Will you promise to do any thing I wish you to do—if I promise to pardon them and recall Staunton?"

"Yes, I will, sir," said the rash and unsuspicious girl.

"Anything?"

"Anything on earth, sir, in the range of my power."

"Hem! Come closer to me. You are a dear, honest child. How nice it would be to have you always here, and be sure that I should not have some fine fellow walking around, and carrying you off some day, as was the case with Janet, my dear," he said, stealing his arm around her waist, and drawing her up to his side—"are you engaged?"

"Engaged! how sir?"

"To be married, I mean."

"No, sir."

"Well, then, Margaret, it most assuredly is in your power to effect a reconciliation between me and Staunton," said he, giving her a squeeze.

"I do not comprehend you, sir," observed she, in a low voice, with a rising colour.

"You do, you little rogue!" giving her another squeeze.

"I want to go to breakfast," said Margaret, flush with embarrassment between her disagreeable position and her dislike of hurting his feelings.

"So you shall, in a moment; but you promised to be mediator between me and Staunton."

"Yes—well; if you want me to give you a kiss—why, as it is you—I'll give you two, if you'll only let me go now, and carry some comfort to Janet."

"Ah, Margaret, I want to marry."

"You are making fun of me," answered.

"I have too earnest and sincere an esteem for you, to 'make fun' of you. I want you to promise yourself to me on condition of my making Charles and Janet, whom you love, happy."

Margaret was silent.

"Come, what do you say?"

"I say that you are not in earnest, and that the conversation distresses me—extremely."

"Before Heaven, I am in earnest in what I am about to declare to you—namely, that you shall never draw from me a pardon for these children, until you promise to give me your hand in marriage; and that as soon as you will give me that promise, I will dictate a letter that you shall write to Charles Staunton, recalling him to the Limes. Come, will you be generous—will you be magnanimous—will you be self-sacrificing?"

"To your own children, you will certainly be magnanimous, sir!"

"Will I? Humph! I never professed to understand that branch of ethics; and I swear to you that I will never grant your petition for their pardon, until you grant my petition for your hand."

A profound sigh from Margaret, who dropped her chin upon her bosom, was the only answer.

"And I say that the very hour you promise me your hand, I will write to Charles. Come; what do you say to that?"

"I say, sir, that I cannot see any good reason why their happiness should depend upon your possessing my hand," said she, looking down piteously at the threatened fingers.

"What! see no reason? I'll tell you, then! If Janet and Charles are reunited, I shall be very lonesome, and need a companion; and I want you."

A deeper sigh followed.

All this time he held her close to his side.

"Come, Margaret, have you never heard the old ladies say 'It's better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave?'"

"No, sir, I never heard anybody but old gentlemen say that!"

"But you can't deny that it is better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave."

"Yes, I can and do, Roland Mildred; for in the latter case, at least, one might be able to love their master, which would make the slavery sweet, you know; and then, sir, there is such a thing as being a young man's darling and an old man's slave, which is not only very much more horrible, but very much more likely to be the case."

"That is very severe. Pray, what is your reason for thinking so?"

"That, as a general thing, there is too much sympathy between the young to permit them to tyrannize over each other much."

"You think, then, it is impossible for a young woman really to love an elderly man well enough to marry him?"

"Nay! I do not say so; I only say it is impossible for me." Let us drop the conversation, if you please."

"By no means, till you decide, for happiness or misery, the fate of Janet and Charles, whom you profess to love, so well."

"Oh! sir, you will not afflict me with this trial?"

"I swear to you, by everything good, great, and sacred, that I never, never, never will grant you a pardon for Staunton till you have granted my suit, and that I will write it the minute you do. Come, will you have me?"

"I don't want you, Roland Mildred."

"Neither do I want to forgive Charles; but come, if you'll marry me, I'll do it."

"I won't!" said Maggy, flinging away from him, and bounding out of the door. She encountered Janet on her way to the nursery—pale, feeble, suffering, patient—and her heart smote her. She had the power—she, of giving instant happiness to that sufferer. Should she withhold it from her? After all, it would make so many other people so very happy, and only herself uncomfortable. With one of her sudden and generous impulses, she bounded back into Roland's room, and stood before him, breathing, panting—

Roland Mildred, I will!"

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

My son, remember that your character ought to shine brighter than your boots." "Suppose I blacken it, then, father?"

We see it stated that a gentleman in the West is training a regiment of hens to destroy insects in his cornfield and garden.

BOARD AND LODGING!—Landlady: "Yes, sir, the board were certainly to be a guinea a week, but I didn't know as you was a-going to bathe in the sea before breakfast, and take bottles of tonic during the day!"—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

A HINT FROM BLUE BEARD.—The *Charivari* gives a woodcut representing one Polish girl, apparently in great anxiety, who says to another, looking through a telescope, "Sister Anne, Sister Anne, do you see nobody coming?" The other answers: "Yes, there are

your brothers, but they are still at an immense distance." About the best thing *Charivari* has done lately, but his idea would have been much improved had he made Sister Anne looking through the reverse end of the telescope.

WINDOWS AND BLINDS.—If we all had windows to our breasts to-morrow, what a demand there would be for blinds.

PECULIAR WOMEN.—The bellman of Watertown, in announcing a temperance meeting, said it would be addressed by six women "who had never spoken before."

THE SENSATION NOVEL.—*Clara*: Yes, dear, I've got the last one down, and it's perfectly delicious. A man marries his grandmother, fourteen persons are poisoned by a young and beautiful girl, forgeries by the dozens, robberies, hangings; in fact, full of delightful horrors!—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

DUKE OF BRUNSWICK.—A joke at the expense of the Duke of Brunswick and his mania for wearing diamonds is, that wherever he is in the habit of visiting, the servants receive no wages, as the sweepings of his highness, the diamonds he lets fall, and the diamond-dust he makes, are sufficient remuneration.

ODE TO MY WIFE'S MILLINER.

Dearer to me than I dared to think!

Dearer to me than the flowering Pink!

Dearer to me than many I've known

Of the little Milliners now full blown.

Ah! When she came for her bill to call,

Then, then I found she was dearer than all.

—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

THE WATER-CARRIER'S ALBUM.—A few days ago a *porteur d'eau* presented himself at the studio of one of the most eminent French photographic artists, and said, "Monsieur has taken the portraits of the Marquis and Marquise X., and their daughter?" "Perfectly," replied the artist. "Will, then, monsieur be so polite as to give me copies of them, as they alone are wanting to complete my album of customers?"

THE ROCHEDALE NEWS READER.

He never reads his *Times*,
But lets contentment, like a smoke, rise from the gorse,
Browse on the Penny Press.

DUCHY OF SCHLESWIG.—The *Charivari* has a sketch representing a German prince rushing up to a counter at which Europe is seated, and exclaiming, "I am entitled to the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein." The other replies, "Take a number to mark your turn. You are 561. Go now, and seat yourself among the other candidates."

"IL FAUT SOUFFRIR POUR ETRE BEL."—People who profess to know something about music (but must not for that reason be thought musical professors), have been complaining that Big Ben is not quite "true" in tone since he was cracked. Well, so long as Ben keeps true to time, we will not quarrel with his tone; and for his want of truth in that respect we shall console ourselves by thinking that "*Si non è vero, è Ben trovato*."—*Punch.*

A STORY FROM SUFFOLK.

Hodge to the Squire's once went to dine,
And drank his fill of beer and wine,
Next day, being asked how he had fared,
Says he, "D'you know I summat stared
That arter guttlin' soup an' fish,
An' wenson in a silver dish,
Plumpoodden, an' sich things as these.
They browt me in plain bread and cheese!"

—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

EVERLASTING FIRES.—The old-fashioned gamekeepers have still a strong prejudice against the modern breech-loading guns. One day lately, at a celebrated battue at a nobleman's coverts, a fine specimen of a gamekeeper hallooed out to his myrmidons, much to the amusement of the proprietor and his visitors, "Keep on, beaters; they've all got their everlasting fires!"

JUSTIFIABLE BIGAMY.—At the Central Criminal Court the other day, one John Double was convicted of bigamy under extenuating circumstances, and sentenced to one month's imprisonment. This was not much; but still, if Double is worthy of his name, has he not a right to have two wives?—*Punch.*

KING THE PUGILIST, "AT HOME."—A good story is current respecting King, the pugilist, and the "host" of Hassocks' Gate Inn, where he resided during his training. It appears that, a day or two previous to the encounter with Heenan, King, during his "play-hours" from training—the "ruling passion" being strong in him—induced "mine host" to have a set-to in the parlour, the host to do all the hitting, the great pugilist stipulating not to return it, but only to parry the blows. Warning at his work, "mine host" let fall his blows both fast and furious. "Now," said King, who was standing with his back close to the

wall of the room, "hit me full in the face." Quick as thought, the request was responded to, and with equal quickness did King avoid the blow by shifting his head, when the knuckles of the worthy host went with such tremendous force against the wall that the sponge was immediately thrown up. Indeed, so serious was the injury sustained, that mine host was compelled to seek surgical aid in Brighton, and there is every probability of his retaining a lasting memento of the visit of the great pugilist to his house.

STRANGE SUPERSTITIONS.—At Abbotsford a little child's cradle is shown, not as belonging to the great poet, but as being actually Sir Walter's cot.—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

EMMA: "That's right, mum, keep a bullyin' of me! I never does nothink proper. As I sez to cook, if I can't wear my crinoline in peace, I say I give a month's warnin'—I say."—*Pun.*

NURSERY GRIEVANCES.

Mamma (indignant): "Well, what are you doing? Don't you see you're knocked baby down with your crinoline?"

PLAIN TRUTHS FOR PLAIN PEOPLE.—Chess is nothing unless it is played on the square.—Small talk is like small beer: a little goes a very great way.—Pure milk, unlike the pure truth, is good for nothing when drawn from the well.—You may depend upon it, but no man of the name of Smith likes being joked about it.—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

EXPERIENCE OF A SALESMAN.—A young man advertises for a place as salesman, and says he has had a great deal of experience, having been discharged from seven different situations within a year.

NEW JUDGES.

1st Bar: Well, I'm glad he's got the appointment.

2nd Bar: Who?

1st Bar: Why, Shee.

2nd Bar: Oh, then, why did you say He?—*Punch.*

MR. AND MRS. BREWER, of York, have twenty-two children. This is perhaps the most extensive Brewery in the North.

LONDON CREAM.—The produce of West End Dairies.—Cook: "Do you call this cream? Why it's thinner than milk!" Milkman: "Oh, all it wants is well stirring-up, the cream's at the bottom!"—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

WIDOW AND WIDOWER.—Tomkins says, a "wider" is a married woman what's got no husband, kos he's dead, and a widower is a feller as runs after the widers."

HOROLOGICAL THOUGHT.—You can stop a clock, at any moment, but you cannot stop a watch. The same remark, my brethren, applies to the stopping the talk of a man and of a woman. He is a great, coarse, ugly machine, but you can silence him. She is a beautiful, fragile, jewelled thing, but she will run on until she stops of herself.—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

NOT GENERALLY KNOWN.—We often hear it stated on undeniable authority that "Christmas comes but once a year." Far be it from us to deny the fact; nevertheless we beg to add that this peculiarity is also an attribute of Easter, Whitsuntide, and several other festivals. Birthdays are also in the same predicament; always excepting in leap-year, the 29th of February, should any one have been unfortunate enough to enter the world on that day.—*Pun.*

THE WAYS OF LIFE.—There's a right way, and there's a left way, and there is, also, a middle way. The latter course is apparently the most followed, for, meet a dozen people in the course of the day, and the chances are that eleven out of the twelve will, if you ask them, "Well, how are you getting on?" instantly reply, "Oh! middling, thank you." There are, one would infer, more middle-men in this world than any others.—*Punch's Almanack for 1864.*

WITH WARD BEECHER'S COMPLIMENTS.—"I found an impression prevailing on the other side the Atlantic that we are excessively arrogant. Of course I denied it. I did not exactly say that we were humble. (Laughter.) It is common in England to say that we are a remarkably vain people, and it did me good to hear Englishmen charge Americans with vanity. (Laughter.) The difference is about this—that we are superficially vain and intensely proud, while the English are superficially proud and intensely vain. (Applause and laughter.) But you will see, if you go to England, the stock you came from, and recognize the family likeness. (Laughter.)"—*Speech at New York.*

A BAD BOY.—The principal of a public school has been sending circulars to the parents, asking for a written authority to "inflict such punishment, corporal or otherwise," as may in his judgment be proper. The following answer proves that one of the

parents, at least, was pleased with the idea:—"Dear sir,—Your flogging circular is duly received. I hope as to my son John, you will flog him just so often as you like. Hees a bad boy is John. Although I've been in the habit of teaching him myself, it seems to me he will learn nothing—his spelling is especially deficient. Woulu'p him well, sir, and you will receive my hearty thanks.—Yours, Moses Walker.

—P.S. What accounts for John sich a bad scollar is that he's my sun by my wife's first husband."

THE LATE GREAT PRIZE-FIGHT.—The *Sussex Advertiser* states that whilst the preliminaries for the late fight between Heenan and King were being arranged, Mr. G. C. Courthope, a magistrate, the owner of the land, made an attempt to stop the proceedings. His interference was taken with the utmost good-humour, but of course was perfectly abortive. The funny men of the prize ring were delegated to encounter him, and the elegant badinage the worthy squire underwent afforded much amusement. They proposed he should act as referee, and actually kept him a prisoner in the ring, where he was obliged to witness the fight despite himself, and was perpetually damned for his sovereign for an inner place.

ALDERLEY EDGE TAKEN OFF.—Of course, when Mr. Punch takes a British nobleman in hand, that British nobleman is either brought upon his knees, or he is consigned to the Asylum for Idiots. But Mr. Punch is always very happy when a slight and gentlemanly hint—*suaviter in modo*—spares him the trouble of extreme measures of any kind. He is delighted to find that in the case of Lord Stanley of Alderley Edge, or rather of Lord Stanley of Alderley Opposite Edge, the mere intimation that Mr. Punch wished to see his lordship on a post-office matter has produced the most beneficial results. The grievance, touching which Mr. Punch was inundated with letters from enraged Edgers, is understood to exist no longer, and the Postmaster-General is hereby informed that he may remain in office *quandiu se bene gesserit*. The testimonial from Alderley Edge may be sent up as soon as the Edgers please.—Punch.

STATISTICS.

WHEELS.—The total for the present year is 2,487.

STOCK OF GOLD.—Nearly £80,000 has arrived from various quarters, and about £360,000 in gold has been sent into the Bank of England. A few parcels have been withdrawn for export purposes, but the total stock is now £13,675,474.

THE HUMAN RACE.—"It has been calculated," says the *Press*, "that the human race now comprises in round numbers 1,000,000,000 of persons, speaking 2,064 languages, and professing 1,100 forms of religion. The average duration of human life is estimated at thirty-three years and six months. A quarter of the children born die before their seventh year, and one-half before their seventeenth. Out of the 1,000,000,000 persons living, 330,000,000 die each year, 91,000 each day, 3,730 each hour, 60 each minute, and consequently one every second. These 330,000,000 deaths are counterbalanced by 412,500,000 births, the excess being the annual increase of the human race. It has been remarked that births and deaths are more frequent in the night than during the day. Calculating one marriage for every 120 persons of both sexes and of all ages, 83,300,000 are celebrated annually."

CUSTOMS IMPORTS.—In the ten months ended October 31, last, the quantities of duty-paying articles of primary importance imported into the United Kingdom, were as follows:—Of cocoa, 9,135,954 lbs., an increase on the returns for 1862 of 415,337 lb.; of coffee nearly 94 million pounds, an increase of 9½ million pounds; of currants, 509,442 cwt., a decrease of 108,352 cwt.; of raisins, 239,485 cwt., an increase of 116,937 cwt.; of pepper, 11½ million pounds, a decrease of 360,168 lb.; of rum, 6½ million gallons, a decrease of 656,556 gallons; of brandy, 2½ million gallons, an increase of 776,180 gallons; of sugar, unrefined, 9½ million cwt., an increase of a million cwt.; of sugar, refined, 258,769 cwt., a decrease of 6,982 cwt.; of molasses, 696,082 cwt., a decrease of 37,579 cwt.; of tea, 103½ million pounds, an increase of 15½ million pounds; of tobacco, unmanufactured, 27½ million pounds, an increase of 5 million pounds; of tobacco, manufactured, 2,363,067 pounds, an increase of 1,216,648 pounds; of wine, 11½ million gallons, an increase of 1½ million gallons.

CLARET AND CHAMPAGNE.—Mr. Shaw, who, by the way, once drank Château Margaux, within a stone's throw of the Château, so bad, that he was obliged to add water to it to render it drinkable, and says that he was "amused" at the incident, is disposed to derive the English term, *claret*, from the place called Claret, whither, in early times, the English "probably" were in the habit of going up to purchase their sup-

plies" of Bordeaux wines. We give this for what it is worth. About Champagne wines there is no such doubt. The famous vineyard of Clos-Vougeot is of such repute, that "when a French regiment marches past, it halts, and presents arms!" Mars taking off his hat to Bacchus! We should be inclined to be as respectful at Beaune, for thence comes one of the choicest of Burgundy wines. Not that you can find it at the inn there. All that Mr. Shaw says for that hostel is, that it is worthy of commendation for its strong smells and its excellently cooked frogs. Indeed, in express localities, the wine of the place is the most difficult to be had of good quality. The only place where a purchaser may obtain any wine he may ask for is Cetto. The dealers there warrant the article, for they make it themselves; like the grand-sire of Lord Palmerston, who guaranteed nothing but his port, "fer," said he, "I made it myself."—*Wine, the Vine, and the Cellar.* By Thomas G. Shaw.

THE MERRY HEART.

'Tis well to have a merry heart,
However short we stay:
There's wisdom in a merry heart,
Whatever the world may say.
Philosophy may lift its head
And find out many a flaw,
But give me the philosophy
That's happy with a straw.
If life but bring us happiness,
It brings us, we are told,
What's hard to buy, though rich ones try
With all their heaps of gold.
Then laugh away, let others say
Whatever they will of mirth;
Who laughs the most may truly boast
He's got the wealth of earth.
There's beauty in a merry laugh,
A moral beauty, too:
It shows the heart's an honest heart,
That's paid each man his due;
And lent a share of what's to spare,
Despite of wisdom's fears,
And made the cheek less sorrow speak,
The eye weep fewer tears.
The sun may shroud itself in cloud,
The tempest-wrath begin;
It finds a spark to cheer the dark,
Its sunlight is within.
Then laugh away, let others say
Whatever they will of mirth;
Who laughs the most may truly boast
He's got the wealth of earth.

C. S.

GEMS.

THE vanity of human life is like a river constantly passing away, and yet constantly coming on.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.—Never purchase love or friendship by gifts; when thus obtained, they are lost as soon as you have stopped payments.

A FORTUNE.—If some persons were to bestow one-half of their fortune in learning how to spend the other half, it would be money extremely well laid out.

SELF-EXAMINATION.—Before we say how wicked that man is, let us examine ourselves, and see if we are not more wicked in some other way.

THE TRUTH.—Teach your children early to speak the truth on all occasions. If you allow them to shuffle and deceive in small matters, they will soon do it in greater, till all reverence for truth is lost.

THE BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE.—The love of the beautiful and true, like the dewdrop in the heart of the crystal, remains for ever clear and liquid in the inmost shrine of the soul.

REASON FOR CHEERFULNESS.—Amidst the most adverse circumstances there are still reasons for cheerfulness. So long as there are motives to gratitude, there is cause for cheerfulness.

MISCELLANEOUS.

GREEN PEAS.—Green peas were gathered from a open garden at Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight, Dec. 14th.

GESE.—Mr. Bagshaw, of Norwich, had before Christmas 10,000 geese fattening on his premises for the London clubs and markets.

THE SUPPLY OF SILVER.—The yield of silver in California is increasing; a new silver region of a hundred miles by forty has been discovered in the Argentine Republic, at the foot of the Andes, and St. Arnaud, in Victoria, is described by miners working

there as "a silver Cornwall." The depreciation in the value of silver is, therefore, likely to keep pace with that in gold, though it will be more quickly checked, as the margin of profit to the miner is considerably less.

ELY DISPENSARY.—It is proposed to build a public Dispensary at Ely, commemorative of the marriage of the Prince of Wales.

DEATH OF THE EARL OF ELGIN.—A Green Riband and the Lord-Lieutenancy of the county of Fife both fall to the disposal of Lord Palmerston, by the death of the Earl of Elgin.

AN EARTHQUAKE.—A smart shock of an earthquake was experienced on the night of the 16th, at Nîmes, Avignon, Montpellier, and other towns in the South of France.

WHITE DEER.—A pure white deer was recently shot in Minnesota. It is pure milk-white, with pink eyes and hoofs, and has not a spot of any other colour on its hide.

PRIZE-FIGHTING.—Five prize-fighters have been committed for trial by the Rotherham magistrates, and six others are bound over in two sureties to keep the peace for six months.

GRAPE VINES.—Grape vines may be protected from the oidium by placing a pound of sea-salt in a hole near the foot of each vine, in November or December. This is the discovery of M. Druelle of Nîort.

FEES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.—It appears from an official document that in 1845 the fees on private bills in the House of Commons amounted to £220,000, and in the next session, when some 500 are expected to be brought forward, they will be very large.

AN OLD WOMAN.—The Lyons journals announce the death in that city of an unmarried woman named Allumbert, at the age of 102 years, 6 months, and 24 days. For some years past the deceased has been confined to her room by bodily infirmities, but retained her mental faculties to the last.

ROSES IN THE TUILERIES.—Two large flower-beds in the reserved garden of the Tuileries now contain several roses in full bloom. Gardeners state that such a phenomenon has not been witnessed since the beginning of the present century. So much for the prophets of a severe winter.

SCOTCHMEN AT THE FRENCH COURT.—The only native of Great Britain who holds an important position about the French Court is a Scotchman named Campbell, who superintends the royal studs under General Fleury. Mr. Campbell lived with the Emperor of the French when the latter resided in England, and accompanied the Emperor in the Italian wars.

BRAINWORK AND LONGEVITY.

The philosophers ought to have length of days for their portion, seeing how their pursuits ought to elevate them above the disturbances of life. And such is, in fact, the operation of their mode of life, by which their faculties are furnished with constant entertainment on subjects which would seem to lie outside the range of uneasy passions, while creating or exciting the noblest moral emotion. And an unusual amount of healthy longevity is, in fact, found amongst philosophers—whether mathematicians, naturalists, or speculative students.

Such things have been heard of as strifes in those serene fields of thought; such sights have been seen as faces furrowed with fretfulness, or working with passion; but the old age of many philosophers is at this moment an honour to their vocation.

Peter Barlow was, when he lately died at 82, the same Peter Barlow that he had been to two generations of friends and disciples. Sir David Brewster is still active and occupied at the same age. The late Mr. Tooke did not puzzle his brain about the currency too much to be still up to the subject at 86. Sir Roderick Murchison is past 70, and so is Sir J. Herschel.

Literature ought to have the same operation as science; but it seems to have more room for agitations and anxieties, except in the case of authors who live in and with their work, exempt from self-regard. Jacob Grimm was a very perfect example of the philosophic serenity which a literary career can yield; and he lived to 78.

There is something remarkable in the longevity of literary women in modern times, even if we look not beyond our own country. Mrs. Piozzi and Mrs. Delaney perhaps scarcely enter within the conditions; and the still lamented Jane Austen was under an early doom from consumption; but Miss Edgeworth was above 80 when she died; Joanna and Agnes Bailie were older still; and Mrs. Trollope died the other day at 84.

The artists who have departed lately have been old. Biot was 87, and Vernet 74. Mulready was 77, and Cockerell, the architect, was 73.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ROBERT M.—We have no knowledge when stirrups first came into use. The Romans rode without them.

PERUX CRIVELLER.—Canthus is the corner of the eye where the upper and under eyelids meet.

A MACHINIST.—Bronze is an alloy of copper with eight or ten per cent. of tin. It is cannon metal.

T. S.—To swear an oath is to swear that you were elsewhere when the crime with which one may be charged, was committed.

D. FRIEND.—The *Cicero* Port, as the name implies, were originally five—Dover, Sandwich, Hastings, Hythe, and Romney; but three others were afterwards added to them, namely, Winchelsea, Rye, and Seaford.

CRINOLINA.—George IV. was the abolisher of the use of hoops when worn to an excess of dimension by the ladies; but who will be the abolisher of crinoline we cannot say.

F. R.—Clio is the muse of history.

PLACIDUS.—It is a difficult thing to give a good definition of a gentleman, but the spirit of politeness consists in our giving such attention to our manners and language, that those around us are left content with us and with themselves.

THE FLOWER OF DUBLINK.—Never mind them. Leave your grievances as Napoleon the Great did his letters, unopened for three weeks, and it is astonishing how few of them, by that time, will require answering.

P. D.—Say "No," but say it kindly—that is, in such a way as not to offend, for a kind "No" is often more agreeable than a rough "Yes."

S. D. O.—Were we in your place, we should accept the opportunity. Remember there are, in this world, four things that never come back—the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity.

R. KINE.—Do not act upon the principle. In the first place, it is wicked; and in the second, it may tell against yourself at a future day. He is the greatest man who, having revenge in his power, does not take it.

DELTA.—We have ourselves frequently witnessed it on the Atlantic. Move where you will at sea, the long line or path of moonlight still meets your eye.

G. G. G.—I. Except in the British Museum, we do not know where you will see a copy. 2. There is a ballad composed upon the single combat which took place between a dog and the murderer of his master.

JAMES BUTTER.—Butter is naturally of a yellow colour, and is deepened when the cows are fed in rich pastures, but an artificial colour is also largely employed, being either the juice of carrots or annotta, generally the latter.

MICHAEL.—Calcereous earth is commonly applied to lime in any crude form, and calcium is the metallic basis of lime.

MADON.—Camphor is the produce of the camphor laurel, a tree growing in Japan and China.

A PASCO.—Though little thought about generally, the envelope-machine must be regarded as a great invention. Not less than four or five hundred millions of envelopes are, in the course of a single year, consumed in this country alone.

JULIA asks why it is that she "feels a ruined dwelling-house to be more melancholy in contemplation than the ruins of a castle or a palace?" The only reason we can give is suggested by the law of association, JULIA has perhaps, always associated with dwelling-houses, happiness and cheerfulness; and battle and strife, sorrow and care, with castles and palaces.

R. JONES.—Without wishing either to be rude or satirical, our advice to you, as well as to every other young man, is never at all to bow the neck to a girl of "sweet sixteen" with a flounced dress, if she is ashamed of her decent, old-fashioned mother.

ANNIE HARRIS.—Yes; all the benign affections, such as love, hope, joy, and pity, add to beauty, while the preponderance of hatred, fear, or envy in the mind, deforms or injures the countenance. Grace is the noblest part of beauty.

A. G.—Cities were founded, and the arts of husbandry, music, and metallurgy, invented before the decease of Adam.

D. O.—Who founded the Pyramids? "Is a question easier put than answered; but there is a tradition among the Egyptians that one Philiton, a shepherd, was the architect of them; and if this was the case, these monuments are far older than the time of Cheops.

TOM BROWN.—All the chroniclers agree in ascribing to the Danes the introduction of hard-drinking and debauchery into England.

REGINA.—Respect for old age being a natural, must be a universal feeling—a feeling which is approved by the judgment no less than dictated by the heart. When respect for old age ceases to exist among a people, Jeremiah notices it as a sign of degradation. "The faces of elders were not honoured."

R. A. P.—Cats are still both numerous and well-treated in Egypt. This arises from their utility in freeing houses from rats and reptiles by which they are infested. Such favourites are they while the dog is looked upon as an unclean animal, whose touch is carefully avoided by the Moslems.

A CORRESPONDENT asks if we can explain "how it is that some men, thought to be so old, still look so young, while others, though young, must still look old?" The cause lies very frequently in themselves. Mr. Bant once, on being asked a similar question, replied, "I never ride when I can walk; I never eat but one dish at dinner; I never get drunk. My walking keeps my blood in circulation; my simple diet prevents indigestion, and, never touching ardent spirits, my liver never fears being eaten up alive." He forgot, however, to add one of the greatest causes of lasting youth—"a kind, unobtrusive heart." Envy can dig as deeply in "the human face divine" as time itself.

BELEIDA.—Think more of yourself; if everyone does not know, we do, that the letters of the most simple-minded of women have been kissed, cherished, and wept over by men of the loftiest intellect. Such has been, is now, and will be to the end of time. It is a lesson worth learning by those young creatures who seek to allure by their accomplishments, or dazzle by their genius, that though he may admire, no man ever loves a woman for these things. He loves her for what is essentially distinct from, though not incompatible with them—her woman's nature and her woman's

heart. This is why we so often see a man of high genius or intellectual power, pass by the De Stairs and Corinnes, to take to his bosom some wayward flower, who has nothing on earth to make her worthy of him, except that she is—what so few female "celebrities" are—a true woman.

E. R.—Left out for want of space.

JAMES WATSON.—Of course it is there are few things that are not easier said than done, but no man has such advantage over others as he whom none can provoke.

CHARLES SMITH.—Yes; a ray of white light may be divided by refraction into a number of distinct rays of different colours.

ALEXANDRA writes to say that her sweetheart is a young gentleman of good manners and fair prospects, but he speaks so flatteringly of her charms that he is often calling her an angel, and as he persists in it against her expressed wish, she doubts his sincerity. She asks our opinion of the matter, and we can only say, that none of us are "angels," till our passions die.

D. HOTLY.—A fraction is an expression for any part of an integer or whole number, such number being considered as unity. Thus, if a pound sterling be a unit, then a shilling will be the twentieth part of that unit, and fourpence will be four-twentieths of that twentieth part.

PUBLICO.—Do not believe it; a man without money is certainly poor, but a man with nothing but money is still poorer. Worldly gifts cannot bear up the spirits from fainting and sinking, when trials and troubles come, any more than headach can be cured by a golden crown, or toothache by a chain of pearls. Earthly riches are full of real poverty.

A. R. A.—We, ourselves, do not believe that fortune attaches herself to certain names. The theory, however, is very old. Pythagoras taught it, and Plato advises men to be careful in giving fair and happy names. Such hopeful names as *Victor* (conqueror), *Felix* (happy), and *Fortunatus* (lucky), were called by Cicero "bona nomina" (good names), and by Tacitus "fausta nomina" (prosperous names).

G. P.—It is perfectly true that we never mention the "gallows" without associating with it the most dreadful of all punishments, but it was formerly a permanent annexation to many of our towns. Now it is peculiar to England. Can the Great, an Italian Lord of the fourteenth century, erected one before the door of his house, and repaired it every year during his life.

A. BALFOUR sends us the following beautiful lines, so appropriate to the season:

WINTER.

I come, I come from the frozen North,
I come with my icy breath;
And mortals deem it a shaft sent forth,
To scatter destruction and death.

I wither the leaves and blight the flowers,
And sigh o'er their ice-bound tomb;
But when have I dimmed the heart's bright hours,
Or blighted the joys of home?

I hush the lark as it soars from earth,
The streams in the birchen grove;
But when have I stilled the songs of mirth,
Or voices of hope and love?

Then why do ye fear me, sons of earth?
I come as a friend to man;
I break the shafts of disease and death,
And lengthen thy life's brief span.

C. DICKES.—Although the spear has been mentioned as the earliest offensive weapon, still, we think, that the club must have been earlier. On ancient monuments it is the weapon of persons supposed to have lived in the heroic ages. From it proceeded the mace, the battle-axe, and similar weapons of percussion. When they appear as weapons of war in Roman monuments, they denote barbarians.

GERTRUDE.—No attitude can be beautiful in which the idea of rest is not conveyed by that permanence and security which result from a perfectly-felt balance. Grace of carriage requires not only a perfect freedom of motion, but also a firmness of step arising from a constant bearing of the centre of gravity over the base of support. It includes ease and security.

HET. HALL.—The divine right of kings means, politically, the absolute and unequalled claim of sovereigns on the obedience of the people; inasmuch that although they may themselves submit to restrictions on their authority, yet subjects endeavouring to enforce these restrictions by resistance to their unlawful acts, are guilty of sin.

E. LOVE.—Hair chiefly consists of an indurated albumen, and when boiled with water it yields a portion of gelatine. Soft, flexible hair, which easily loses its curl, is that which is most gelatinous. Vaguely distinguished two kinds of oil in hair: the one colourless and in all hair, the other coloured, and imparting the peculiar tint to hair. Black hair, also, contains iron and sulphur.

FRANK HALLIDAY.—It is, we should think, a very difficult thing to die naturally on the stage. The only really good personator of a dying scene, according to our conception, was Edmund Kean, when making his *fare* in Richard III.

"I have observed," says Dryden, "that in all our tragedies, the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die; 'tis the most comic part of the whole play."

MARY GREEN.—It is a Druidical relic; but the leaves of the holly are not prickly all the way up the tree. They are only so where they are within the reach of cattle; higher up, they preserve their waxy, but are smooth, more tapering, as having lost their angular points. Some of the mid-height leaves, with the taper shape of the upper ones, retain three, two, or one point. The leaf is very beautiful, the middle fibre, beautifully varying by its lighter hue from the dark glossy green. The lower side is pale-greyish, and shows the thickness of the leaf.

R. A. P. writes that he does not know where to purchase anything that he wants, for the purpose of furnishing his house, with the view of being married. "This," he continues, "is on account of the universal fraud which is practised by tradespeople in the adulteration of the articles they keep for sale." He concludes that "as we are a nation of shopkeepers we are also a nation of defrauders." We regret that his case does not apply to the person he has chosen to be his wife. May we ask whether he has looked well into her eyes, to see that one of them is not of glass, or ex-

amined her mouth to see that none of her teeth are false? Living amongst such fraudulent people, R. A. P. cannot be too cautious.

EMMA DORNING.—There are many preventatives recommended, but there are none of which we are aware that can be relied on.

CONSTANCE SINGLTON.—We think your handwriting is very good indeed, and perfectly ladylike.

A PROFESSOR OF ODD JONS.—We are sorry that we cannot find room for the acrostatic. Your question respecting the welding of cast steel we will reply to next week.

GERALDINE.—Have nothing to do with either allopathy, homoeopathy, or hydropathy, but go to the hospital, and you will get the best advice from the most experienced professors of medicine. As to putting an end to yourself, the very thought is both wicked and absurd.

MADELINE not only feels deep sympathy for MISERABLE CHARLEY, but offers herself as a loving helpmate. She is nineteen years of age, of the middle height, has black hair, fair complexion, and is of a very loving disposition.

E. M. says he wishes to communicate with a lady. His height is 5 ft 4 in.; he has blue eyes, fair complexion, and auburn hair, and very good-tempered; he has an income of about £150 per annum, and is engaged on the stage.

ALIAS JAMES BRIDGLEY.—You can get no better work for your purpose than Cressy's "Encyclopedia of Civil Engineering." It is thoroughly exhaustive of the subject, and is illustrated by something like three thousand engravings. It is published by Longmans, Paternoster Row.

M. P. H. will feel great pleasure in corresponding with EARNEST, as she is quite fascinated with the description he gives of himself. She is nineteen years of age, fair complexion, blue eyes, light hair, loving and confiding disposition; and will be happy to exchange *cartes-de-visite* with EARNEST.

AMY ALICE.—If you are resolved to emigrate, we think Australia would be a better destination for you than New Zealand, which is at present very much disturbed by the war with the natives. To the former colony, it would cost you for passage-money and subsistence something like £20 for second-class accommodation. Your handwriting is very good.

MEREDITH.—Having spent six years in learning a business, you will act unwisely, we think, in not pursuing it; unless, indeed there are very strong reasons, such as physical incapacity, &c., against your doing so. Your handwriting is fair, but would scarcely qualify you for a mercantile office.

A. PRINGLE.—No; though high and loud, and low and soft are frequently confounded, yet when considered distinctly, their difference is easily understood. For example, if we strike a large bell with a deep tone, though it gives a very loud tone, it will still be a low one; and if we strike a small bell with a high tone, it will still be a high tone, though the stroke be ever so soft.

ALICE and ROSA are both afraid they shall be left like two of the last roses of summer, "blooming alone," and die old maids. They, therefore, anxiously wish for sweethearts. ALICE is dark, with brown, laughing eyes, and ROSA is fair with blue eyes. Neither have money, but they are of good families. ROSA prefers a dark gentleman, and as ALICE does not mention any preference, we suppose that she is not quite so particular as her friend.

To this EDITOR.—Sir.—Seeing the advertisement of MISERABLE CHARLEY, I answer his appeal, not because I am short of beer; but because, I am charmed with CHARLEY's description of himself—I only hope he will be equally pleased with me. I am seventeen years old, 5 ft 2 in. in height, good figure, thick, dark brown hair, large, dark eyes, long lashes, good even teeth and expressive mouth, clear, dark complexion, rosy cheeks and a nose slightly retorted.—BESSIE WALL.

CAROLUS writes: I beg to offer myself as a candidate for the hand and heart of your correspondent who signs herself A. E. C. in No. 32 of THE LONDON READER, and to inform her "there is a possibility of obtaining a good husband." I am twenty-three years of age, 5 ft 8 in. in height; I will not say anything of my personal appearance, except that I am passionately very clean and sober, and withal of a loving disposition, and hold a good situation in a large mercantile house.

W. G. says he is anxious to enter the "holy estate of matrimony," and makes the following statement: I am so circumstanced as to have very few females among my acquaintance, and am not in a position to extend the number. I am 5 ft 10 in. in height, received a tolerable education; very domestic, quiet, and of refined habits; I am neither handsome nor good-looking, in fact, I may say I am more ugly than anything else; am a Protestant, and in a public office with a salary of £110, increasing annually by £10; possessing also a small private fortune.

D. HANDY.—We incline to believe that you do not yet very well know yourself. We have never known, or even read of a man being perfectly proof against the sincere devotion of a good and generous-hearted woman. Where this exists, there is nothing more touchingly beautiful than the manner in which it sometimes shows itself. On the conclusion of a marriage on one occasion in a village church, the bridegroom signed the register with "his X mark." The pretty young bride did the same, and then turning to a lady, who had known her as the best scholar in the school, whispered to her, while tears of honest love and admiration stood in her bright eyes; "He's a dear fellow, mizz, but cannot write yet. He's going to learn of me, and I would not shame him for the world."

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